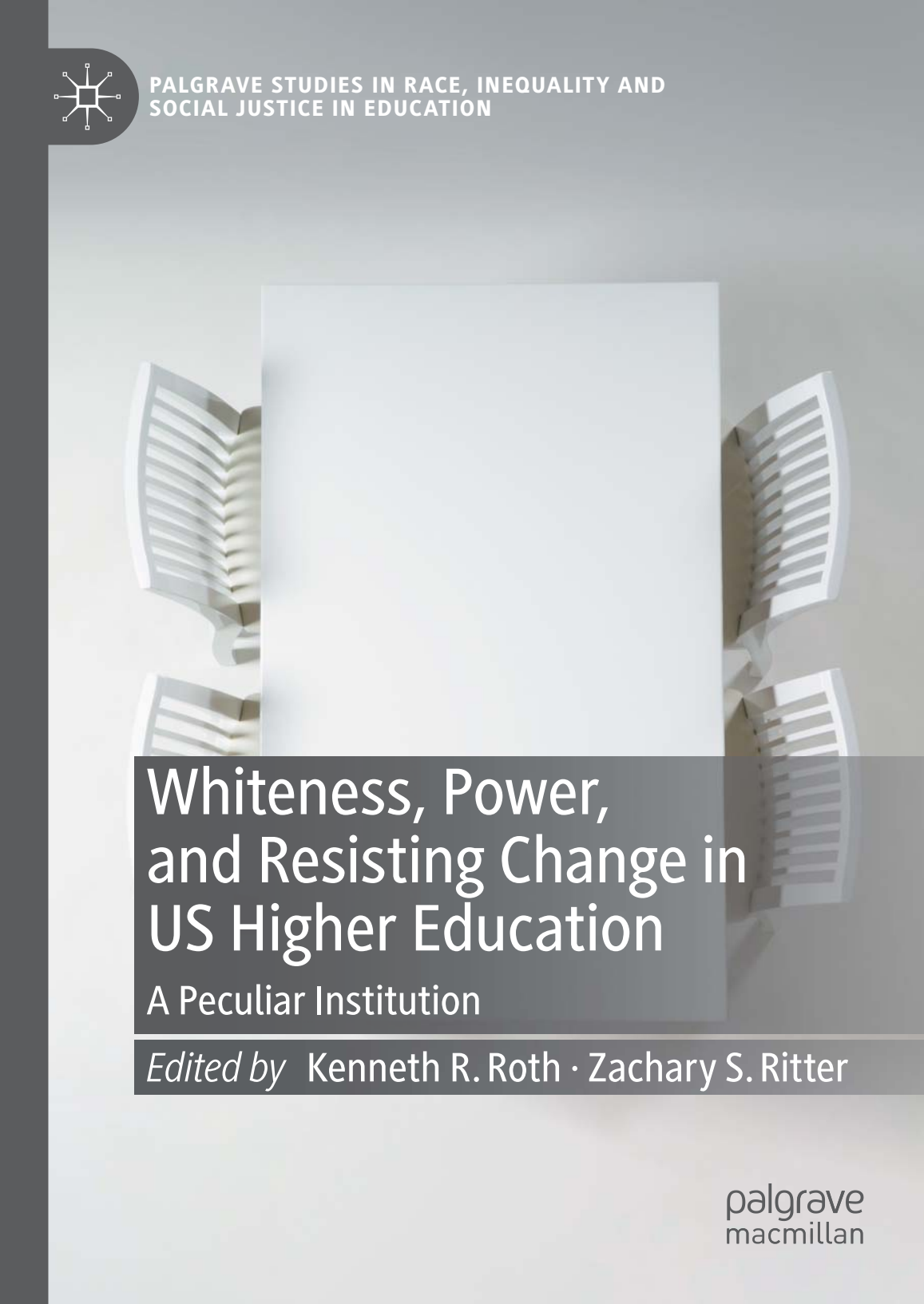
PALGRAVE STUDIES IN RACE, INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION
Whiteness, Power, and Resisting Change in US Higher Education
A Peculiar Institution
Edited by Kenneth R. Roth · Zachary S. Ritter
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Editors

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Editors
Kenneth R. Roth
CHOICES Project
UCLA
Los Angeles, CA, USA

Zachary S. Ritter
California State University,
Dominguez Hills
Carson, CA, USA

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Preface

As we go to press, the United States turns its gaze to yet another peculiar institution: policing. George Floyd, a 46-year-old Minneapolis Black man died in May 2020 after Police Officer Derek Chauvin held his knee on Floyd's neck for eight minutes and forty-six seconds, all the while Floyd pleaded to be allowed to breathe. Floyd, whether or not he was aware, allegedly passed a counterfeit $20 bill at a convenience store, and that single potentially accidental act cost him his life.

Chauvin, 44, is seen in social media video resting his knee on Floyd's neck, his hands nonchalantly in his pockets, as he ignores calls from onlookers to let Floyd go. He looks like he's posing for a big game trophy photo, opined a former Los Angeles police detective and Assistant Inspector General who personally investigated police use of force for much of his 25-year law enforcement career.

Floyd's death, then, may be a picture perfect example of murder under color of authority, similar to what we have previously witnessed in the deaths of Ezell Ford, Eric Garner, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, Walter Scott, and Oscar Grant, and many others (Hudson, 2013). But, despite these tragic outcomes, and often administratively ruled bad practices, only one police officer associated with these deaths has been tried and convicted of a crime. US law enforcement either can't seem to learn from its mistakes, or is *allowed* to resist calls for change.

But, this resistance to change is not exclusive to US law enforcement. We argue it has insidiously permeated virtually all American institutions,

and certainly higher education. What these and other US institutions have in common is a resistance to unhook from Whiteness, a doctrine that rewards and ascribes superiority across virtually all domains to phenotype, and the absence of melanin in skin.

The result of this resistance increasingly is the undermining of perceptions of justice, equity, and fair play in transactions with US institutions, particularly law enforcement and criminal justice. As a result, this resistance ultimately imperils our collective belief in and reliance on *all* US institutions, and ultimately the democratic republic for which they stand.

A parallel between law enforcement and the operation of US colleges and universities at first glance may seem opaque. Yet, in both cases, these institutions have been long-established, in fact likely founded around the same time, and have supported racist practices throughout their history.

Further, given its *perceived* intellectual authority, higher education has set the standard for what is valuable to know, who benefits from knowing, and how to access those benefits, often presenting what is valuable by devaluing (geographically and philosophically) alternate ways of knowing. Ironically, the institution encouraging critique of all things and promoting restraint in the absence of broad understanding, has since its inception in the United States delimited what is considered useful knowledge, who can create it, and often to what ends it can be used, and all through a single lens: Whiteness.

While the practice of Whiteness in higher education does not have the same consequences as it can in law enforcement, the wounds it inflicts are not inconsequential. They may be subtler and more nuanced but over time and across generations can become nearly as violent in different ways (Oliver and Shapiro 2013).

As educators, we believe in the promise of education, to enrich self and community, to train for a vibrant politick, and to promote reasoned goodwill and prosperity across the globe. While US higher education has made indisputable contributions to the expansion and wealth of the Americas and beyond, it has not acknowledged its role in the exploitation and oppression of First Nation Peoples and Americans of African descent. Neither has it addressed increasing distress on its campuses due to xenophobia and white nationalism. Neither has it diversified its faculty, or developed tenured pathways for the burgeoning ranks of contingent faculty who tend to work more, earn less, and in many cases possess the same credentials as tenured faculty.

There are many reasons to praise the accomplishments of US higher education; at the same time, there is cause to reflect, to atone, and to reorganize toward a more realistically aligned institution for today's students.

What authors have sought to do here is identify areas where higher education should consider improvements—organizationally, culturally, and philosophically. At the same time, the problems exposed within higher education are problems that extend well beyond higher education, and may not be capable of correction within the academy until they are addressed in the broader society.

Tucson, AZ, USA — Kenneth R. Roth
Los Angeles, CA, USA — Zachary S. Ritter

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Notes on Contributors

Nolan L. Cabrera is a nationally recognized expert in the areas of racism/anti-racism on college campuses, Whiteness, and ethnic studies. He is currently an Associate Professor in the Center for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Arizona, and was the only academic featured in the MTV documentary *White People*. His new book, *White Guys on Campus,* is a deep exploration of White male racism, and occasional anti-racism, on college campuses—a text Jeff Chang (author of *We Gon' Be* Alright) described as "A timely, provocative, even hopeful book." He completed his graduate work at UCLA in Higher Education & Organizational Change and earned a B.A. from Stanford University in Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity (Education focus). He is a former Director of a Boys & Girls Club in the San Francisco Bay Area, and is originally from McMinnville, Oregon.

Issac Carter is a critical educator, organizer, musician, poet, and scholar. Over the course of his career, he has led many initiatives to support college access, retention and graduation of low-income, Students of Color, and other underrepresented student populations. Dr. Carter teaches courses that critically examine higher education administration, organizational leadership, Black musicking, and coloniality. His curricular and pedagogical praxis continually connects knowledge production with the pursuit of justice in underserved communities. Much of his time with youth and young adults is dedicated to addressing the intersections of racial criminalization, LGBTQ rights, immigration, the prison industrial complex, and

gender justice. Dr. Carter is currently coediting the upcoming volume, *Unhooking from Whiteness*.

Chris Corces-Zimmerman is a doctoral candidate in the Center for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Arizona and a research fellow for the Arizona Medical Education Research Initiative. His research centers on a critique of Whiteness in higher education and the ways it impacts students, staff, and faculty at both individual and institutional levels.

Dr. Charles H. F. Davis III is Assistant Professor in the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education at the University of Michigan, where his research and teaching broadly focus on issues of race and racism, systemic oppression, and structures of domination in education and its social contexts. As former faculty, Chief Strategy Officer, and Director of Research of the University of Southern California's Race and Equity Center, Dr. Davis has trained more than 5000 college and university faculty, staff, and administrators on campus racial climate assessment, anti-racist teaching practices, and hiring for racial equity.

Reshmi Dutt-Ballerstadt is the Edith Green Distinguished Professor and teaches in the English Department at Linfield College in McMinnville, Oregon. She is the author of *The Postcolonial Citizen: The Intellectual Migrant* and is the lead editor of the forthcoming book *Civility, Free-Speech and Academic Freedom in Higher Education*. Dutt-Ballerstadt frequently writes and critiques about conditions that impact underrepresented faculty in higher education and issues of free speech and academic freedom.

Brad Erickson has published research on pluralism in Europe, police violence, and the secondary trauma experienced by social workers in Oakland, California, and popular music in space. He teaches in the School of Humanities and Liberal Studies at San Francisco State University where he is the Elected Lecturer Representative of the California Faculty Association. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of California, Berkeley.

Dr. Felix Kumah-Abiwu is the Founding Director of the Center for African Studies and Associate Professor in the Department of Pan-African Studies at Kent State University. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from West Virginia University. He also studied at Ohio University and the Legon Centre for International Affairs & Diplomacy,

University of Ghana. His research focuses on the politics of development, elections/democratization in Africa, Black males/public education, social movements (African diaspora), and global narcotics policy. He is the author of *The Dynamics of U.S. Narcotics Policy Change: Implications for the Global Narcotics Regime* (2012). He recently contributed a chapter on Black males and media gatekeepers to a Palgrave edited volume, entitled *Marginality in the Urban Center: The Costs/Challenges of Continued Whiteness in the Americas and Beyond*. Dr. Kumah-Abiwu's scholarly articles have appeared in the *Journal of Pan African Studies*, *West Africa Review*, *International Journal of Public Administration*, *Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, *Social Sciences*, *Journal of Economics/Sustainable Development*, *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics, Urban Education*, and *Journal of Men's Studies*.

James Martel teaches political theory in the Political Science Department at San Francisco State University. His most recent publications include: *Unburied Bodies: The Subversive Corpse and the Authority of the Dead* (Amherst, MA: Amherst College Press, 2018) and *The Misinterpellated Subject,* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017). He also is the author of a trilogy of books on Walter Benjamin, and currently is working on a new book, *Disappointing Vision: Anarchist Prophecy and the Power of Unseeing*.

Blanca Missé is an Assistant Professor of French in the Modern Languages and Literatures Department at San Francisco State University. She has a Masters degree in Political Philosophy from the University of Paris X Nanterre (2007), and a Ph.D. in French with a Designated Emphasis in Critical Theory from the University of California Berkeley (2014). She specializes in the Radical Enlightenment, 18th Century French Literature, Francophone literature and culture, 18th through 20th Century French and European philosophy, as well as Marxism and Feminist Theory. She has published on the French Materialist tradition (Diderot, La Mettrie), Marx and Utopian socialism (Fourier), and issues of academic freedom. She is a member of the Executive Board of the San Francisco State University Chapter of the California Faculty Association, the AAUP, and of California Scholars for Academic Freedom.

Zachary S. Ritter is Associate Dean of Students at California State University-Dominguez Hills. He has been an adjunct professor at UCLA, University of La Verne, and University of Redlands,

where he taught social justice history. Ritter also is a diversity and inclusion consultant for Organic Communications. He previously served as Associate Dean of the Office of Institutional Diversity at Harvey Mudd College, and as Associate Director of the Office of Campus Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Redlands. He has taught courses in Intergroup Dialogue courses at UCLA and California State University-Dominguez Hills, where he focuses on issues of social justice, research methods within higher education. He recently coedited the Palgrave volume, *Marginality in the Urban Center: The Costs and Challenges of Continued Whiteness in the Americas and Beyond*.

Kenneth R. Roth is a Research Associate with The Choices Program at UCLA, where he examines access and equity issues associated with college going among underrepresented groups. Previously, he taught research methods and organizational communication at USC's Rossier School of Education, in addition to more than a decade teaching in the Art, Digital Media and Communication departments at California State University, Dominguez Hills. Dr. Roth co-edited *Marginality in the Urban Center,* with Zachary Ritter and Peary Brug, and is editing a new book entitled, *Whiteness, Power and Resistance to Change in US Higher Education—A Peculiar Institution,* also with Zachary Ritter.

Hallie O. Star holds a Ph.D. in the Higher Education Leadership Program from Idaho State University and is an administrator and adjunct faculty member at the College of Southern Idaho. Her research interests include the critical study of Whiteness in higher education and the intersections of race, gender, class, and family history.

Elaine Jessica Tamargo is ABD in the Higher Education and Organizational Change program at UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies (HEOC) and a research analyst for the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI). Elaine holds an M.Ed. in Student Affairs from UCLA and has worked in roles related to career development, multicultural affairs, and student activities prior to returning to graduate study toward the doctorate. Her research interests include student career development, first-generation student experiences, and co-curricular education.

Devon Thomas is the Senior Coordinator for Student Engagement at the University of Arizona where she coordinates campus-wide skill building programs that connect undergraduates with opportunities for

experiential learning both within and beyond the classroom. She also is completing a doctorate at the University of Arizona. Her research interests include Whiteness in higher education and resource allocation for undergraduate co-curricular programs.

Richard Van Heertum is a Faculty member and Academic Advisor at the New York Film Academy—Los Angeles. Previously, he has also taught at UCLA, CUNY, the Art Institute and Drexel University. Richard holds a Ph.D. from UCLA in Cultural Studies and Education and an M.A. in Economics from San Diego State University. He has published four books: *The Fate of Democracy in a Cynical Age: Education, Media & the Evolving Public Sphere* (ProQuest, 2009), *Educating the Global Citizen: Globalization, Educational Reform, and the Politics of Equity and Inclusion* (Bentham, 2011), *Hollywood Exploited: Corporate Movies, Public Pedagogy and Cultural Crisis* (Palgrave, 2010) and *The Selling of Bohemia* (RJV Books, 2015).

Richard L. Wagoner is Associate Professor in the College of Education at Idaho State University. He currently serves as Chair of ISU's Faculty Senate and lead faculty within the Higher Education Leadership Program. He also is President of the Center for the Study of Community Colleges. His research is concerned with how and to what extent globalization and neoliberalism affect higher education institutions and their practices, particularly focused on the work faculty do at all levels. Wagoner's work focuses specifically on community colleges as organizations and their roles within the larger higher education environment.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Charles H. F. Davis III

In August 2017, the nation looked on as white nationalists descended on Charlottesville, VA and the campus of the University of Virginia (UVA). Under the banner "Unite the Right," thousands of members of Nazi/neo-Nazi groups, the Ku Klux Klan, and armed white militias mobilized as a show of force to oppose the removal of a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee. On August 12, a day prior to the formal rally, participants gathered in Charlottesville's recently renamed Emancipation Park with picket signs, merchandise, and regalia featuring swastikas, Confederate flags, and other symbols of white supremacy. Later that night, carrying outdoor torch lights, "alt-right" persona Richard Spencer led dozens of white supremacists through campus chanting anti-Black, anti-immigrant, and anti-Semitic slogans. Among them, "white lives matter" and "you will not replace us" were rallying cries that reified the desire of white supremacists to maintain their "property rights," including the right to exclude (Harris, 1993).

C. H. F. Davis III (✉)
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA
e-mail: hfdavis@umich.edu

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Upon reaching a statue of Thomas Jefferson, the University's founder, Spencer and others were confronted by a contingent of mostly Black UVA students. Having locked arms with other non-Black Students of Color and several white students, the collective of courageous counter-protestors faced down Spencer without so much as campus police presence to ensure their safety. Not surprisingly, the fragility of white supremacy, when met with the immoveable solidarity of anti-racist students, yielded violence. Although no serious injuries were reported, several students were sprayed with chemical irritants, shoved, and even punched before first responders eventually intervened. In the immediate wake of the demonstration, University President Teresa Sullivan released a 4-sentence response:

> As President of the University of Virginia, I am deeply saddened and disturbed by the hateful behavior displayed by torch-bearing protestors that marched on our Grounds this evening. I strongly condemn the unprovoked assault on members of our community, including University personnel who were attempting to maintain order.
>
> Law enforcement continues to investigate the incident, and it is my hope that any individuals responsible for criminal acts are held accountable. The violence displayed on the Grounds is intolerable and is entirely inconsistent with the University's values.
>
> Teresa A. Sullivan
> President

The next morning, Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe declared a state of emergency, citing concerns for public safety and the need for additional support to safeguard residents. The Virginia State Police even declared the assembly "unlawful" after observing escalating violence incited by white nationalists before the formal rally, but these responses were too little too late. Just two hours following the declarations, in an area adjacent to the park, James Alex Fields—a self-avowed white supremacist—drove his car into a crowd of counter-protestors, killing Heather Heyer, and injuring 19 others.

As one of the most visible and collective manifestations of overt white supremacy in recent years, this watershed moment further revealed the extent to which this nation remains seemingly incapable of, as Barbara Jordan (1976) once put it, "being as good as its promise" (https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barbarajo

rdan1976dnc.html). To be sure, neither the sentiment of white nationalism or a public rally of white identity extremists (Davis, 2018) are newly occurring phenomena. The materialization of ideological white supremacy rests at the very foundation of the United States and its many institutions, including higher education. While much about the Charlottesville moment can (and should) be attributed to the deeply racist political rhetoric of the 2016 Trump presidential campaign and, later, the Trump Administration, colonial dispossession of Native lands, genocide of Indigenous people, and the holocaust of African enslavement remain antecedent. In Virginia specifically, we are reminded of the arrival of the "White Lion," a Dutch ship with "20 and odd Negroes" (Kingsbury, 1933, p. 244) to Point Comfort from Angola, West Africa in August 1619.

It is precisely because and in *spite* of this history of racial colonial terror that American postsecondary institutions continue to embrace the vestiges of our Nation's violent past. Whether the dispossessed Indigenous land turned plantation grounds on which institutions were built or the names of slave owners and segregationists on classroom buildings, the historical legacies of racism (Harper & Hurtado, 2007) are ever-present on postsecondary campuses. This brings me to my point: American colleges and universities are, in addition to their educational functions, sociopolitical organizations where disenfranchisement and structural disempowerment of racially minoritized people is institutionalized.

Returning to Charlottesville, many of us, myself included, watched the breaking news reports with concern and even intrigue. Having processed the moment with various people, including individual educators and larger audiences at a variety of national conferences since 2017, nearly all of us shared a sense of outrage at what had transpired. Some of us raised questions of dismay and disbelief: "How could this happen?" And, unless one is a direct stakeholder in higher education, the institutional context of the University of Virginia and its administrative response might have easily gotten lost. At minimum, Thomas Jefferson was himself a slave owner who actively participated in racialized sexual violence against the Black women he enslaved. Richard Spencer, once *the* leading voice for the "alt-right" brand of white nationalism, is twice a graduate of the University of Virginia, as are many white alum who likely were never educated about or forced to confront their own ideas regarding race, Whiteness, power, or privilege. Or, they simply chose to ignore it.

According to the current Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System reports, UVA, as a state-public institution, enrolls only 6.5% Black students in a state that is 22.3% Black (Harper & Simmons, 2019). The same data show faculty is 73% white. Taken separately, these details may appear disparate and unrelated. Together, however, the once-obscured *everydayness* of institutionalized white supremacy is revealed and the peculiarity of postsecondary institutions as sites of contemporary racial terror becomes normalized. What is more, this institutional response did nothing precise to address the deeply racist nature of what transpired, failed to identify who was made more vulnerable (i.e., racially minoritized students generally and Black students specifically), and merely attempted to distance the institution's espoused values from the terroristic events. Such responses to campus racism and racial terror have become the status quo for postsecondary institutions, especially in the Trump Era. Rather than communicate an understanding of their respective and proximal relationships to white supremacy and educational violence (Mustaffa, 2017), institutions repeatedly choose to misremember the past and deny the racial realities of the present.

In this volume, Roth and Ritter have brought together an important contribution to the organizational literature on higher education. In particular, this text critically interrogates the relationship between status quo racism, the skyrocketing use of adjunct faculty, the loss of academic freedom, and the increasing reliance on monied interests and their implications for the stated values of America's higher education institutions. In an era in which colleges and universities are increasingly expected to redefine their answerability (Patel, 2016) to a racially and ethnically diverse public, a focus on racialized systems, structures, and institutionalized practices is as timely as it is important. Furthermore, today's expectation for acknowledgment and atonement emerges at a time when student participation in activism and organized resistance, on-campus and beyond, is at an all-time high (Eagan et al., 2015). The current sociopolitical moment in which higher education finds itself has, again, revealed the unapologetic truth about this nation and its institutions: That is, the genocide of Native and Indigenous peoples and the enslavement and exploitation of Black Africans lay at the foundation of school and society's sociocultural symbiosis.

The longstanding question of whether society produces school or school produces society fails to fully recognize the extent to which both school and society remain indelibly guided by systemic white supremacy

and, therefore, remain in service to one another to protect the property of Whiteness (Harris, 1993). This is especially important in the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic, which, over time, may redefine higher education in unprecedented and unpredictable ways. What is evident thus far is the enduring inequities within and across institutions and society. Further, many institutions, due to the growing influence of monied interests, reopened campuses without a legitimate vision to address the disparate impact the 2020 public health crisis had—and will continue to have—on Black, Latinx, and First Nation students, staff, and faculty and their communities. As healthcare and case data have shown, these groups have been most impacted by COVID-19, both in terms of rates of infection, mortality, and community disruption. In addition, as links between the origin of the novel coronavirus and an open market in Wuhan, China escalated in the national discourse, colleges and universities offered little with regard to protecting Asian and Asian American members of campus communities from the xenophobic attacks to which many have already fallen victim. At the time of publication, innumerable racial and class inequities in higher education were glaringly evident (i.e., student indebtedness, retention and attrition, and learning efficacy), and none of them have been addressed during the hurried return to normalcy demanded by the economic imperative to reopen campuses.

Such inattention is yet another peculiar signal of the expendability of *some* for the benefit of the greater white good, a signal that neoliberal ideologies and academic capitalism have once again compelled institutions to place profits, productivity, and prestige over people. This is in large part due to the desire of many postsecondary leaders to return to normal operations, a status quo in which deeply harmful systems of prejudicial exclusion, discrimination, and violence remain unchanged. Higher education stakeholders need not look any further than hiring freezes, furloughs, and layoffs affecting race-based epistemologies and academic units (e.g., African and African American Studies departments), some of which have been either indefinitely suspended or closed entirely, to see higher education institutions are resuming their denial of complicity with a long-festering and broadening white nationalism. Much like the people who have been disregarded, their ways of knowing also have been deemed disposable for the sake of institutional solvency and addressing the financial woes of institutions for which they, neither in part nor alone, are responsible. What, then, can be done? How can higher education

reimagine itself and devalue its operations that have been employed and served certain interests so well for so long?

For starters, perspectives offered in this volume help move educators and postsecondary stakeholders closer to understanding the enduring and endemic nature of racial capitalism and the status quo of white supremacy in contemporary higher education. To be sure, today, the thinly veiled mask of white liberal post-racialism, which has long obscured the ongoing pain and suffering of racially minoritized peoples in the United States, has been all but stripped bare. The seemingly daily threats to the dignity and power of marginalized peoples, in the United States and elsewhere, regardless of race, has forced upon college and university educators the urgent responsibility to reimagine the form and function of the US university in a time of controversy and challenge. Beyond the many calls for investments in social justice, commitments to diversification, and rhetorical (but not structural) value of "inclusive excellence," a meaningful deconstruction of both *where* and *how* Whiteness paradoxically undermines the presumed public mission of higher education is desperately needed. Furthermore, and as demanded by generations of concerned stakeholders, the need for educators and administrators to remediate and improve their literacy regarding structural racism (and their place within it) is critical. Yet, even the consummate postsecondary professional remains without many of the necessary analytical and practical tools to identify racial problems, attribute and accept responsibility for racial inequities, and enact transformative organizational change. For these reasons, and innumerable others, this volume is an important step in closing that gap.

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CHAPTER 2

Historic Scaffolds of Whiteness in Higher Education

Chris Corces-Zimmerman, Devon Thomas, and Nolan L. Cabrera

> There is no institutional will to enact a shift away from white supremacist, patriarchal capitalism. There is no institutional will to recognize the anti-Blackness that stains the very roots of this University. (WeDemandUNC 2015)

Introduction

The above words articulated by students at University of North Carolina in a 2015 statement of demands to administrators echo similar sentiments expressed by countless Students and Faculty of Color on college campuses

C. Corces-Zimmerman (✉) · D. Thomas · N. L. Cabrera
Center for the Study of Higher Education,
University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ, USA
e-mail: ccz@email.arizona.edu

D. Thomas
e-mail: devonthomas@email.arizona.edu

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across the country. In short, they describe a lack of the egalitarian and democratic principles typically believed to be at the core of US higher education. Beyond a concern for individual racist acts experienced by Students and Faculty of Color, this quote speaks to the very scaffolding of institutions of higher education—a central problem deeply rooted in the past and present. If there is a discrepancy between the lived experiences of Students of Color and the purported values of equity and inclusion so many colleges and universities claim to embrace, the question then becomes "Why isn't higher education better serving its students, particularly Students of Color and other underrepresented groups?" To which critics might reply, "What if it is working just as it is supposed to?" It is this poignant dissonance between inclusion and exclusion, between acceptance and rejection, between belonging and othering, that make colleges and universities such a peculiar institution in both the past and present moment of the United States.

When thinking about the peculiarity of higher education it is important to do so through two similar yet distinct lenses: (1) The institution of higher education as a system and (2) Individual institutions that function within the system. Since its inception in the early seventeenth century, US higher education has been peculiar in both who it served and how it served them. In many ways, one could argue a more apt definition to describe the institution would be "higher acculturation" or "higher stratification" as those have been just as central to the outcomes of these institutions as has their role in preparing leaders and educated citizens. Similarly, at a local level, individual institutions have historically been thought to serve as a means of social and professional advancement where success is based on hard work and acquired intelligence. Yet, a critical look at history tells a very different story of exclusionary admission practices, promotion of eugenicist and racially biased research and scholarship, and a centering of values and policies that reward individuals who look, speak, and act in line with the rules of Whiteness (Wilder 2013). While relatively few texts offer a critique of institutional inequity, those that do almost always emphasize who has been excluded while leaving out who is responsible for the excluding (Karabel 2005; Soares 2007). Though understandable in that these narratives seek to challenge the myriad

N. L. Cabrera
e-mail: ncabrera@email.arizona.edu

inequitable structures and practices put in place to limit access of students with a range of marginalized identities, focusing on instances of exclusion allows oppressive forces, such as Whiteness and white supremacy among other modalities, to remain invisible and uninterrogated. The purpose of this chapter is to lay the groundwork for the remainder of this book by revisiting the expansive history of higher education in the United States and training light on Whiteness and how it has served to create inequities at both institutional and individual levels.

The Context of Whiteness

When describing the majority of higher education institutions in the United States, most scholars use one of two terms: Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) or Historically White Colleges (HWC). The term PWI is purely descriptive in nature and primarily focused on demographic or individual-level student characteristics. In contrast, embedded within the term HWC is a critical acknowledgment of the past and present legacy of white supremacy that is central to all "white-serving institutions." Where PWI allows institutions and individuals to conceptualize efforts to address racial inequities as a question of increasing the number of Students of Color who are admitted to the university, the concept of higher education institutions as being "historically white" shifts the focus to the need for reforms and responses to address deeper structural and systemic components of these institutions. Specifically, this focus on the various ways institutions, both past and present, have maintained and invested in Whiteness suggests the need for deep, systemic change to institutional policies, culture, and physical space in order to effectively engage in initiatives to promote racial equity and social justice.

In order to fully understand and appreciate the omnipresent nature of Whiteness in higher education, it is essential to begin by both (1) Outlining what is meant by the term "Whiteness," and (2) Illuminating the myriad ways in which Whiteness and white supremacy permeate institutions of higher education through the presentation of four dimensions of Whiteness.

Defining Whiteness

When discussing the concept of Whiteness it is important to make a clear distinction between white people as individuals, and Whiteness as

an ideological, epistemological, and ontological force that functions to support individuals, actions, and appearances deemed "white." Leonardo (2009) defines the difference this way: "'Whiteness' is a racial discourse, whereas the category 'white people' represents a socially constructed identity, usually based on skin color. … Whiteness is not a cultural but a social concept" (pp. 169–170). While this may appear to be a matter of semantics, it is actually a fundamental distinction to the understanding of how Whiteness influences institutions of higher education. For example, to consider Whiteness as synonymous with individual white people would lead one to believe the effects of Whiteness in higher education could be addressed by changing the beliefs, actions, and interactions of white students, staff, faculty, and administrators on campus. In contrast, understanding Whiteness as a racial discourse suggests a milieu rooted in both past and present structural, political, and cultural practices and norms that has implications for admissions, faculty advising, and racially hostile campus environments. To understand Whiteness as a racial discourse is to acknowledge the myriad ways in which institutions of higher education actively engage and are complicit in maintaining norms and practices that privilege being identified as white over other individual-level descriptors.

The 4 Dimensions of Whiteness in Higher Education

Whiteness in the US context is an omnipresent, oppressive social force (Bonilla-Silva 1997). That is, when we interrogate Whiteness in higher education, we are critically examining the historically situated ideologies, discourses, policies, and social structures that make institutions of higher education favor white people over People of Color, resulting in reifying systemic white supremacy. Historically, higher education has been a central mechanism for the reproduction of white supremacy, as well as an arena for some of the most visible challenges to the US system of racial oppression (Cabrera 2019). While colleges and universities have demonstrated some egalitarian social functions, they continue to function as mechanisms for the *intergenerational reproduction of white privilege* (Carnevale and Strohl 2013). To understand how this intergenerational reproduction occurs, we explore the ways Whiteness is historically ingrained and scaffolded within these institutions via: (a) Racial composition, (b) Physical structures, (c) Social/cultural norms, and (d) Organizational/curricular norms.

Racial composition. The most visible way Whiteness becomes embedded in higher education is through who is allowed in and who is excluded. Since its inception, the US university, and especially "elite"[1] colleges and universities, has utilized a variety of racially aware policies and practices to exclude or severely limit access of non-white students (Cabrera et al. 2015; Karabel 2005; Kendi 2016). These have ranged from early quotas on the number of Jewish students allowed into the university (Karabel 2005) to contemporary attacks on Affirmative Action (Crosby 2004). The end result is the same, regardless: the maintenance of structural white supremacy through the regulation of individual-level racial diversity (Cabrera et al. 2015).

Physical infrastructure. The physical infrastructure also informs how students racially experience the college campus (Banning 1993, 1997; Banning and Bartels 1997; Cabrera et al. 2017). Cabrera et al. (2017) argued a core structuring value of higher education is a white entitlement to social comfort. Conceptualizing space as both the physical and ontological environment in which white students engage with their surroundings, scholars have argued the normalization of Whiteness has allowed white students to feel as though all spaces are theirs for the taking and any attempt to restrict their access is a form of oppression or inequality (Sullivan 2006). This normalization of Whiteness is rooted in both the historical legacy of institutions largely developed by and for white people, and present-day white ways of being, which are deemed superior in measures of merit, deservedness, and access. Campus buildings continue to bear the names of slave holders and white supremacists, and much of the curriculum centers on white thinkers and white knowledge (Gusa 2010). As a result, there tends to be a strong continuity between white experiences and perspectives and the physical campus environment. In describing the environmental context of higher education institutions, Cabrera et al. (2017) asserted, "the physical infrastructure of colleges and universities send messages about a campus' inclusivity/exclusivity and the interpretation of those messages frequently differ(s) by race/ethnicity" (p. 51). In essence, the same institutional structures and artifacts creating

[1] We use "elite" in quotes to center how this term is less about identifying superior education offerings, and instead about offering opportunities for people in socially-elevated positions who are able to maintain or augment their status by and through elite-designated educational spaces.

a sense of inclusion and even pride for white students can create a sense of exclusion for Students of Color (Cabrera 2019).

The recent controversies regarding Confederate statues on campuses is just one example of this dimension. At UT-Austin, there was a statue commissioned in the 1920s of Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederacy (Courtney 2017, April 17). The statue was prominently displayed on the campus mall for nearly a century, but it was consistently a source of controversy for valorizing a person and group (the Confederacy) who were fighting for the right to own slaves. In this dramatic example, it is relatively easy to see how a cultural symbol would send different messages to students based on race. For white students, it can serve as a sense of "Southern pride" or minimally fade into the background while for Black students, such monuments serve as both a visceral reminder of the history of slavery and as a message the institution does not value people like them. In this way the physical infrastructure of HWCs tell a story of the ways Whiteness and white ways of being have historically and contemporaneously shaped more than just the physical features of the institution.

Social/cultural norms. Cultural norms are extremely difficult to pinpoint as "culture" is both ever-changing and amorphous. However, when the subject is race, historically there have been two dominant cultural norms at HWCs: Overt white supremacy and colorblindness (Cabrera et al. 2017; Karabel 2005; Kendi 2016). When US higher education was originally formed, overt white supremacy was the cultural norm (Kendi 2016). During that time, it was normal few People of Color were present on college campuses since they were ideologically deemed incapable of doing college-level work. An example of this cultural norm is a letter of recommendation on behalf of W. E. B. Du Bois to Harvard President Charles Elliot which read in part, "Mr. Du Bois would be considered a very promising candidate if he were white."[2] Even one of the most brilliant social scientists in US history had his intellectual capacity questioned in the late nineteenth century because of the color of his skin.

While Whiteness has remained a practice at the center of most institutions for decades after the Civil Rights Movement, a significant shift in the cultural expression of Whiteness in higher education has taken hold

[2] https://harvardpress.typepad.com/.a/6a00d8341d17e553ef01a73d76369c970d-pi.

as it slowly has fallen out of favor to profess white people are inherently superior (Omi and Winant 2015). Instead, Whiteness has been rearticulated from *superior* to *normal* which modified its cultural hegemony (Cabrera 2009). Through this cultural shift, Bonilla-Silva (2006) argued a colorblind ideology became dominant in US society as a means of maintaining white supremacy. Essentially, the structure of white supremacy is so ingrained in US society, to argue racial oppression still exists appears as its own form of racism (Bonilla-Silva 1997, 2001, 2006). As institutions of higher education are frequently reflections of the norms of their larger societies, colorblindness became an institutional norm within HWCs (Cabrera et al. 2017). This did not mean white supremacy was vanquished from college campuses. Rather, it took a different form. From this orientation, it continued to be embedded in the organizational/curricular norms of HWCs.

Organizational/curricular norms. Diane Gusa (2010) coined an important concept called the *White Institutional Presence* where she described the multiple ways Whiteness is embedded within HWCs. Two of these components are: monoculturalism and white ascendancy. By monoculturalism, Gusa (2010) argued white cultural orientations are embedded within institutions and seen as "normal" despite assertions colleges and universities are bastions of multiculturalism (D'Souza 1991). Instead of, for example, Ethnic Studies being the radical norm of colleges and universities, they are viewed as a fringe area of study while countless institutions require all students take general education courses in Western (white) History and English (white) Literature (Sleeter 2011).

The prevalence of monoculturalism implicitly assures white voices and experiences are those that matter within the academic canon (Gusa 2010; Sleeter 2011). This, in turn, perpetuates what Gusa (2010) refers to as *white ascendancy*, whereby white people are seen as the truly intelligent and academically worthy people in society. White ascendancy and white monoculturalism work in tandem—if all of the academic voices one hears are white (monoculturalism), then it is logical to assume these authors are the most meritorious (ascendancy).

Finally, Gusa (2010) describes a phenomenon known as *white estrangement*, in which she explains how, even on racially mixed campuses, white students are able to physically separate themselves from Students of Color (Cabrera 2019). Despite Tatum's (2003) provocative book title, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Alone in the Cafeteria?*, it is actually white

students on college campuses who do the most segregating within their social groups (Antonio 2001). In fact, a more appropriate question might be, "Why *don't* we notice when white students are all sitting together in the cafeteria?" Again, the normalization of Whiteness tends to render it invisible, at least to white people.

While these four dimensions of Whiteness are interrelated, not all are equally relevant or prominent across the five moments in the racial history of US higher education we identify in this chapter. For example, much of the institutional scaffolding of US higher education was created in the earlier periods. Throughout this chapter we will make direct connection to the dimensions we believe are most relevant as we explore the history of Whiteness in US higher education.

The History of Whiteness and US Higher Education

While the history of US higher education is both vast and diverse, for the purposes of this review, five distinct historical moments have been identified as key points of inflection, each of which resulted from a sizeable shift in the social or political landscape of the country and led to efforts to reinforce or adjust the ways Whiteness was embedded in US higher education. Although this is not a comprehensive review of the history of race in higher education, these five moments exemplify the variety of ways colleges and universities facilitated the dominance of Whiteness in society, and were externally influenced by the social and political structures of Whiteness.

The first of these moments is tied to the adoption and development of higher education in the United States. Generally referred to as the colonial era (1636–1862), this period represents the germinal point from which many of the first institutions of higher education were founded as small, elite entities designed to educate the children of wealthy, white families and to facilitate the larger colonial mission of the country as a whole (Thelin 2011). This moment served as the foundation for much of the scaffolding of Whiteness, supplying structure for the subsequent evolution and present-day functioning of the university.

The second moment centers around the passage and implementation of the 1862 and 1890 Morrill Land Grant Acts, representing a notable attempt at wide-spread federal investment in the development of US higher education. While this moment is generally considered the starting

point of the democratization of higher education, the reality is while the institutions established during this period technically were intended to increase access, the vast majority continued to operate under Jim Crow era policies and ideologies. As an array of exclusively white colleges and universities were developed throughout the country, white people experienced an expansion in their access to higher education and a subsequent increase in their physical and social mobility. The result was the first signs of a budding white middle class and a growing racial divide between whites and Blacks.

The third significant moment in US higher education began in 1944 following World War II (WWII) with the passage of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (GI Bill). In the aftermath of the war, hundreds of thousands of veterans returned to a country and economy largely unprepared to absorb them, both Black and white alike, and who rightfully expected to find opportunity waiting for them at home for their service and sacrifice abroad. While the country shifted from a war-time economy to a global economy, the federal government established the GI Bill as a way to both educate veterans for the future economy and to quell widespread uprisings spurred by unemployed white and Black veterans. The GI Bill era is understood to be another point of increased access to higher education; however, as was the case with the passage of the Morrill Acts, the implementation of GI benefits during a time of ongoing segregation and Jim Crow *de jure* racism, resulted in limited gains by Students of Color while maximal opportunities were afforded white students.

The fourth historical moment examines the implementation of Affirmative action efforts in higher education and the subsequent "whitelash" that challenged these programs and policies through individual and institutional discourses of Whiteness.

Finally, the fifth moment looks at present-day trends in higher education tied to the adoption of neoliberal ideologies that center merit and achievement in a "post-racial" social context where a higher education is thought to be the great equalizer, open to all willing to work for it. While temporally distant from the founding moments of higher education, the present period continues to embody and maintain many of the same practices and ideologies of Whiteness that served as foundational principles for early colleges and universities.

Five Historical Moments of Whiteness in US Higher Education

Having outlined the conceptual structure through which this chapter will explore the historical presence of Whiteness in US higher education, the following sections explore in greater detail a range of policies, practices, and structures that reify the relationship between Whiteness and higher education.

Period 1: Whiteness as a Foundation of US Higher Education

Since its inception in the 17th and eighteenth centuries, US higher education has been influenced by external social forces of Whiteness and simultaneously reinforced those dynamics through the students it admitted, the curriculum taught, along with the broad-based structural policies that determined the culture and function of higher education institutions. As centers of intellectual life in the early colonial era, colleges and those individuals who were associated with them, often were afforded a great deal of power and prestige. The (predominantly white) administrators, faculty members, and students who dominated this exclusive segment of society had the unique authority to determine what and who was considered valuable and deserving of the social and cultural capital necessary for acceptance into the elite realms of society (Soares 2007). Given these institutions were at the time populated exclusively by wealthy, white men, pursuing a college education served to reinforce the association of Whiteness with intellectual, moral, and social supremacy (Karabel 2005). In addition to the demographic primacy of Whiteness, the physical infrastructure and existence of institutions of higher education within the US also was deeply rooted in Whiteness well before a single student set foot on campus. Located on lands violently stolen from Indigenous peoples and built through the physical exploitation of enslaved Africans (Wilder 2013), these institutions served as monuments to the dominance of Whiteness. In addition to the ways enslaved peoples were exploited for their physical labor, they also were treated as a form of financial investment colleges could sell in order to raise money for the preservation of the institution (Anderson and Span 2016). For example, facing impending foreclosure in 1838, Georgetown University sold 272 enslaved men, women, and children in order to have sufficient funding to keep its doors open (Harris et al. 2019). It was this ability to rely on free

and exploitable labor that allowed institutions to amass the wealth that continues to support them today.

Whiteness also was embedded in the intellectual foundations of American Education. In providing an intellectual home for the advancement of race science seeking to link stereotypes (e.g., intelligence or deviance) with different racial groups, early US institutions were complicit in the promotion of the belief white people were smarter, and superior to People of Color (Painter 2010). As Wilder (2013) argued, "The rise of scientific racism, like theological racism, required interventions in the academic and intellectual realms, from the passive distortions of unreliable and biased sources to the active invasions of slave traders and slave owners seeking intellectual proofs for their suspicions and assertions about the nature of color" (p. 190). This complicity in the construction of white supremacist narratives validated and enhanced the ways Whiteness was conceptualized within the larger US society, enabling institutions of higher education to justify policies and practices upholding Whiteness.

Given many of the individuals who served as leaders during this period received their education at these institutions, they frequently applied what they learned inside and outside of the institution to their conceptualization of how the country should be organized (Thelin 2011). While classroom lectures actively or passively taught white men about their intellectual and moral superiority, outside of the classroom white students and faculty were permitted to exploit enslaved peoples for such menial tasks as doing chores, serving meals, and maintaining the campus grounds (Wilder 2013). In this sense, white college students reinforced white supremacy and the centrality of Whiteness when they carried their learning into emerging organizations, helping to shape countless other dimensions of society (Wilder 2013).

Finally, given the prominent role religion played as a stratifying force in the colonial United States, the intersection of religion and higher education was pivotal in the transition from religion as the predominant determinant of social status to race and Whiteness as a marker of superiority and elitism. As Painter (2010) explained, while initial social structures in both Britain and The Colonies were driven by the belief of the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon Protestant, subsequent waves of immigration to the United States from Ireland, Germany, Italy, and beyond, necessitated a change in the mechanisms of stratification. The result was a shift toward an emphasis on characteristics associated with Whiteness that could thus be restricted to a select group of individuals who possessed

those characteristics. For example, physical traits like skin color, facial structure, and body type quickly became associated with individual traits, such as intelligence, work ethic, dedication to family, and temperament. This messaging centered on a few elite institutions in the colonial period, but the terrain changed substantially as college access rose dramatically during the Land Grant era.

Period 2: Land Grant Act of 1862 and Its Legacy

The Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 and subsequent second Land Grant Act of 1890 are often thought to have marked a pivotal moment in the democratization of US higher education as they are believed to have expanded college access overall as well as providing an increasingly diverse range of institution types from which to select. As Stein (2017) explained, Land Grant policies were agreements between the federal government and individual states through which the federal government would provide recently stolen Indigenous land in Western states to governments that could sell it and the profits used to fund public institutions of higher education. Federal Land Grants were cheaper than capital investments and provided a strategy for States to use Western land allotments while investing in education institutions which were just starting to open their doors to women and working-class, rural white students (Dorn 2017). In this sense, the Land Grant Acts were a state-sanctioned strategy to secure revenue for higher education through land acquisition, as Indigenous lands became spaces to colonize, exploit, and settle for capital accumulation (Stein 2017). Moreover, the emphasis on the settling of the Western lands reinforced the ideology of Manifest Destiny through which white people justified their colonization of native land by claiming a divine mandate to civilize and assimilate non-white peoples.

While some expansion of access to higher education for formerly excluded students did occur, the reality is any increase in access remained within a white supremacist system. While the Land Grant Acts provided more funding for existing and new institutions, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Whiteness prevailed in the form of "separate but equal" policies, and funding structures allowed white politicians and leaders to control the degree to which education opportunities were expanded for African Americans. This was particularly striking in the emphasis placed upon these institutions by white leaders

who required HBCUs to focus on "practical" forms of education. As Thelin (2011) points out:

> In other words, black higher education was not preparing alumni for professions and fields associated with leadership and genuine power. Ultimately, large-scale philanthropy from the North tended to favor segregated black institutes and colleges whose curricula offered preparations for skilled crafts and trades.... (p. 102)

In this way, white people were able to maintain control over formerly enslaved peoples while operating under the guise of a more equitable system of higher education.

As access to and participation in higher education expanded following the implementation of the Morrill Acts, institutions searched for ways to justify the maintenance of their restrictive and exclusionary admissions practices. In this historical moment the group most directly targeted was Jewish students, who while phenotypically white, had not yet been granted access to the benefits of Whiteness (Painter 2010). As will be the case in subsequent historical moments, white students and administrators in this period began to advance the belief, "…at a certain point, the arrival of the Jews would mean the departure of the sons of the Protestant upper and upper-middle classes whom Harvard most wished to enroll" (Karabel 2005, p. 86). The response was a series of overt and covert efforts to restrict the enrollment of "undesirable" Jewish students through the implementation of racial quotas and changes in qualifications giving preference to characteristics associated with Whiteness (Karabel 2005). By assigning desirable characteristics like trustworthiness, work ethic, and cultural superiority to those individuals who were deemed to be white, institutions of higher education were able to justify exclusion of an entire class of students under the guise of maintaining institutional standards of quality and excellence.

This second historical moment of Whiteness emulated a common occurrence in the racial and racist history of the country as a whole. In times of expansion and increased access to higher education, as was the case with moments of expanded immigration, rather than fully open the doors to allow previously excluded individuals to pursue education, whites set the parameters of Whiteness (Harris 1993) to limit expanded access to a small subset of individuals. In this way white people have used the tools of Whiteness to both minimize access to the precious resources of

Whiteness, and to ensure those who are on the margins of Whiteness are left to fight each other for an unnecessarily smaller piece of the opportunity pie. This same dynamic is central to the third moment of Whiteness in higher education following the passage of the GI Bill.

Period 3: GI Bill

Passed in 1944, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (GI Bill) was designed to provide veterans who served in WWII access to financial support for a collection of social services ranging from home and business loans to pursuing a high school or college education (Katznelson 2005). While access to higher education continued to expand in the years after the Morrill Acts, colleges and universities remained largely or entirely segregated based on race, restricting veterans of color to pursue higher education at a select few institutions (Thelin 2011). As Katznelson (2005) argued, "It missed how the conversation of bigoted values and racist practices had been built into the law's design and administration from the start" (p. 122). That is, the law itself was not inherently discriminatory against People of Color, but because virtually all aspects of US society remained rooted in the politics of Jim Crow, veterans of color were not able to equally pursue the full extent of GI benefits (Brodkin 1998; Humes 2006; Heckler 2017; Katznelson 2005). Despite this continued inequity, the dominant narrative described the GI Bill as a truly monumental moment for the expansion of higher education: "the belief that everyone could go to college became firmly established in the minds of the American people; college was no longer reserved for an elite few" (Cohen and Kisker 2010, p. 195). The missing modifier in the previous quotation is "white," as it should have read "the belief that every white person…" because People of Color, Blacks in particular, were systematically excluded from pursuing education benefits provided by the GI Bill.

This historical moment represents two quintessential examples of how Whiteness has scaffolded US higher education. First, by excluding People of Color, through either de jure or de facto racism, US colleges and universities served to generationally privilege white people through their ability to accumulate the financial and cultural capital afforded them by Whiteness (Herbold 1994). In addition, the historical narrative surrounding the GI Bill and its role in democratizing education

after World War II suggests those individuals who did not "take advantage of" these benefits lacked interest or ability. This false narrative only served to further reinforce a belief in white meritocracy and the parallel pathologization of Blackness. Similar to how institutions used racialized definitions of character and intellect to restrict access, the passage of "race-neutral" legislation like the GI Bill also served to maintain an exclusive right of white people to thrive in institutions of higher education (Harris 1993). As a result, US colleges and universities remained largely white in composition while maintaining an outward appearance of providing benefits to veterans for their war-time contributions (Humes 2006). This is why Katznelson (2005) described this era as one *When Affirmative Action Was White*.

Period 4: Affirmative Action and the Subsequent "Whitelash"

Affirmative action protocols as they are presently thought of were put in place by executive order advanced by presidents Kennedy and Johnson and required employers and colleges and universities to take "affirmative action" to ensure applicants, students, and employees were considered without regard for any marginalized identities they might possess (UCI 2019). This transition marked a significant shift in US education policy, since up to this point it was merely accepted white people were inherently intellectually superior and thus it was natural for them to be over-represented within colleges and universities (Cabrera 2009; Omi and Winant 2015). The 1960s challenged those beliefs, asserting the humanity of People of Color, while still leaving structured white supremacy in place (Bonilla-Silva 2001). Through this shift, Whiteness moved from an overt, top-down social structure to a more insidious, hegemonic one, allowing white people to more quickly and subversively implement racially biased policies while appearing to value equity—in short, a *white agility* in racial matters was developed (Cabrera 2019). Whereas in a pre-Civil Rights era, race-based affirmative action policies would have been entirely dismissed, the post-Civil Rights era brought arguments advancing a discourse of Whiteness, or "whitelash," rooted in notions of race evasiveness (Annamma et al. 2016), reverse-racism (Cabrera 2014), and meritocracy (McNamee 2018).

While the adoption of affirmative action policies and related Civil Rights legislation served to challenge the decades-long oppression of People of Color, and the practiced white supremacy of the Jim Crow era,

these gains were frequently met with intense challenges in both social and legal spheres. In particular, the relatively modest gains People of Color experienced through affirmative action programs were met by strong resistance from white people who viewed any move toward racial equity as a loss of their own opportunity for educational access and advancement. Hewitt (2005) describes this as whitelash: "Negative reactions within white communities to (1) the proximity of Black communities following migration, or (2) the potential acquisition of new power and/or status by Blacks, or (3) the fashioning of policies or legislation to bring about greater equality between "racial"/ethnic groups, or (4) the enforcing of such policies or legislation" (p. 5). These challenges to affirmative action policy as a zero-sum game serve as examples of the "retrenchment" or "reclamation" of white racial privilege that so frequently follows moments of racial progress (Crenshaw 1988; Thompson Dorsey and Venzant Chambers 2014).

In response to the perceived "reverse racism" of affirmative action policies, the argument frequently made by white plaintiffs in each anti-affirmative action case has followed the same logic: Because I am white, I have been denied admission to this institution as a result of racially biased affirmative action policies. That is, *but for* the school's consideration of race in admissions, each of the plaintiffs believed they would have been admitted—essentially their Whiteness was being used against them. This formally began in 1978 when Allan Bakke sued the University of California, Davis Law School after he was denied admission (Chang et al. 2003; Crosby 2004). Subsequently, Cheryl Hopwood (*Hopwood v. Texas*, 1996), Barbara Grutter (*Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003), Jennifer Gratz (*Gratz v. Bollinger*, 2003), and Abigail Fisher (*Fisher v. Texas*, 2016), all filed similar suits claiming they were discriminated against because they were white (Blanchard and Baez 2016). In each of these cases the white plaintiff directly or indirectly articulated two powerful statements: (1) they believed it had been a Student of Color (as opposed to a white student) who was admitted to the institution instead of them, and (2) efforts to address centuries of racial inequities against Students of Color had created an equally unjust circumstance of reverse-racism against white people (Hannah-Jones 2016).

While affirmative action policies have survived these legal challenges, they did so in a way that ultimately served to center and reproduce Whiteness. Notably, in explaining his deciding vote in support of the UC Davis affirmative action policies, Supreme Court Justice Powell offered what

has been termed the "diversity rationale," through which he concluded affirmative action policies were important because they provide for a diverse learning community that ultimately supports a sharing of different ideas and opinions (Chang 2005). Subsequent research introduced in the *Grutter*, *Gratz*, and *Fisher* cases consistently showed a *critical mass* of Students of Color on campus increases learning outcomes for all students, including white students (Chang et al. 2003; Crosby 2004). From this perspective, diversity efforts represent a *compelling interest* in education offerings and consideration of race is permissible as long as it is narrowly tailored (Crosby 2004).

This argument was directed at a conservative Supreme Court that was not going to engage issues of systemic racism or collective harm (Stohr 2004). Legally, the argument around the "diversity rationale" made sense, but it sent a troubling message vis-a-vis Students of Color. The implication was as long as previously excluded Students of Color contributed to the learning of white students, their presence was admissible (Blanchard and Baez 2016). In short, though affirmative action has played an important role in increasing the number of Students of Color on college campuses[3] (Crosby 2004), it has only been permitted to do so to the extent it does not substantively disrupt Whiteness.

Period 5: Neoliberalism, Post-racism, and the State of Whiteness

In the half-century since the Civil Rights Movement, the country as a whole, and institutions of higher education as a component of society, have become increasingly polarized between continued progress toward racial equity and the articulation that racial progress is an attack on American values (Omi and Winant 2015). Specifically, the two complementary ideologies of neoliberalism and post-racism have allowed white people to maintain control over institutions of higher education while providing the perception of a more racially equitable academy.

Neoliberalism is generally conceptualized as an ideology promoting individualism, meritocracy, and where market-driven concepts of value, worth, and efficiency are prioritized over learning and educational equity (Olssen and Peters 2005). While not inherently rooted in white supremacy, neoliberal theory serves to reinforce and maintain Whiteness

[3] Contrary to popular belief, the number one beneficiary of affirmative action has been white women (Chang et al. 2003).

in higher education because it ignores the historic ways racially exclusionary policies have made it nearly impossible for Students of Color and white students to operate equitably in the same institution. Moreover, the emphasis on individualism often leads to a great deal of victim blaming in which Students and Communities of Color are blamed for educational inequities rather than properly situating those inequities as the result of centuries of racial oppression.

Drawing on many of the same white supremacist perceptions of the United States in the pre-Civil Rights era, a post-racial ideology presumes US society has advanced to a point of racial equity in which active efforts to challenge Whiteness and racism are no longer justified and are in fact exclusionary to white people. Not only have claims of post-racism provided ammunition to challenge affirmative action policies, but they also have been used to question the validity of racially biased curriculum and pedagogy, as well as calls for institutional change by Students and Faculty of Color who experience acts of racism on a daily basis (Hughey 2014).

The turn of the twenty-first century also witnessed the rise in multiculturalism and increased emphasis on diversity in the development of critical pedagogy and curriculum (Ladson-Billings 2003). Quickly, the liberating and social change tenets of multicultural education were co-opted to serve the neoliberal agenda, which served to rationalize colorblind attitudes and racial inequalities as normal and even patriotic (Melamed 2006). At the same time, the increased focus on multiculturalism has come at the cost of perceived fear of loss of privilege, or a sense of "reverse racism" among white college students, moving the racial justice narrative toward one of white victimization (Cabrera 2014; Feagin and O'Brien 2003).

Today, some argue we are entering an emboldened en/whitened epistemological state where Whiteness is taking up social justice discourse to advance white nationalism (Matias and Newlove 2017). This is demonstrated through the political strategies of Turning Point United States, media outlets like Campus Reform and Fox News, and policy initiatives including the Executive order on Free Speech, which highlights how any perceived threat to challenging the covert white dominant racial discourse on college campuses must be put down. At the same time, this period remains closely tied to the tenets of colorblind racism which often makes Whiteness exceedingly difficult to identify (Matias and Newlove 2017; Bonilla-Silva 2006). Whether emboldened or covert on college campuses, these attitudes, behaviors, values, and norms are a manifestation in service

to re-center and reinforce Whiteness (Cabrera et al. 2017). Colleges and universities remain challenged by their continued unwillingness to divest from Whiteness inherent in their ongoing operations (Roy 2016).

Conclusion

It is instructive to return to the title of this chapter and the specific analogy of scaffolding to understand how Whiteness operates within institutions of higher education. Generally, "to scaffold" is to describe a framing structure supporting the development and construction of something being built. In thinking about the historical evolution and present-day operation of US higher education, the concept of scaffolding refers to the physical and policy infrastructure into which Whiteness has been embedded, and serves to amplify and maintain Whiteness and white supremacy. Throughout this chapter we have discussed five historical moments in the evolution of higher education, each of which has built upon, or modified in some way, the foundational base of individual institutions and the institution of higher education as a whole. Applying the concept of scaffolding to these past and present historical moments, one can begin to understand how and why institutions of higher education are so closely intertwined with Whiteness and white supremacy. The original scaffolding of the early US college was built for white people by exploiting the labor of enslaved peoples and the land stolen from Indigenous First Nation peoples. While elements of higher education have changed since, the philosophical core of the US system has remained relatively consistent and has largely continued to serve its original purposes. Never once have we as a nation stopped to tear down the scaffolding that sustains US higher education. Thus, while the facade of the institution may have altered over the years, the same base remains and is why we believe US higher education remains a peculiar institution. Historically White Colleges (HWCs) are just that, and continue to be committed to Whiteness. While this may seem like a hopeless or dramatic depiction of US higher education, it is important to ground any efforts at challenging Whiteness in a realistic appraisal of current circumstances. Change agents in higher education must be realistic about their institutions and the racialized legacies they maintain. The debate remains as to whether the appropriate response to these realities should be rooted in an ideology of reformation or abolition or the reconstruction of US higher education. We do not pretend to have or offer answers to this question, but rather

stress the importance of a realistic and historically informed understanding of Whiteness in US higher education. US colleges and universities are peculiar in their contradictions, most notably the claim to uphold equity and inclusivity while maintaining a staunch commitment to Whiteness and white supremacy. Any attempt to address this paradox requires acknowledgement of the deeply rooted and insidious scaffolds of Whiteness in US higher education.

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CHAPTER 3

Confronting Ourselves: An Autoethnographic Approach to Whiteness in Higher Education

Richard L. Wagoner and Hallie O. Star

Introduction

In the proposal development stage of a dissertation, we as chair (Wagoner) and doctoral candidate (Star), realized what seemed a straightforward piece of research—how to better serve the instructional needs of Students of Color—was problematized by our own Whiteness. Seemingly like the layers of an onion, the complications, biases (conscious or not), and advantages of our Whiteness constantly presented roadblocks. In this chapter we present the literature review and, ultimately, methodological approach we both agreed needed to be completed as an essential element to conduct quality research related to the original research problem and

R. L. Wagoner
School Psychology & Educational Leadership, Idaho State University, Pocatello, ID, USA
e-mail: wagorich@isu.edu

H. O. Star (✉)
College of Southern Idaho, Hailey, ID, USA
e-mail: starhall@isu.edu

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production of a sound dissertation. In short, we found we do indeed need to confront ourselves first, focusing on our beliefs and our privilege, as an unavoidable process for white educators when pursuing cross-racial research and remediation of social inequities within the academy.

Racism, from the perspective of white people, is typically seen as an isolated, individual behavior, which some may or may not exhibit, rather than as an "historic, traditional, normalized [practice], and deeply embedded in the fabric of US society" (DiAngelo 2011). As a dominant racial discourse in the United States and in higher education, Whiteness often goes unseen and unchallenged by those who benefit most from its dominance and invisibility. Further complicating the matter, the majority of white people in the United States, particularly those in higher education, view themselves as colorblind and as a result, don't see themselves as racist. Further, white people typically fail to see the effects of structural racism and therefore see racism and racist acts as individual, isolated, and not the behavior of "good, non-racists." This same colorblind or color neutral, individualist attitude is reflected and perpetuated on campuses across the country. We suggest by identifying and naming specific discourses of Whiteness operative in higher education, white leaders can learn to see and understand how Whiteness contributes to structural racism. Ultimately, we believe if white leaders in higher education can develop more racial awareness by fully comprehending and addressing Whiteness, we can disrupt, interrogate, and dismantle racist systems and the legacy of white supremacy on campus. However, white leaders must be willing to see and identify what white supremacy is, take responsibility for it and learn how to contain and neutralize it in order to improve the campus climate and outcomes for People of Color.

As earlier mentioned, we began this research with a much broader question. Initially, our intent was to examine how efforts to increase equity and inclusion are perceived by minority students in US higher education. However, as research and our discussion about it progressed, a larger, more fundamental problem refused to resolve itself. Stated plainly: We realized as researchers, practitioners, and education leaders we, too, are stuck in a loop of using language like "marginalized" and "underserved" instead of using words like Black or Brown or Student of Color. We also found when the need arose to use the word "white," we were uncomfortable and sought to find another means of description. Why were we, and seemingly most of academia, resistant to using descriptive language to discuss race and racism? Because it is racist? Because

we believe we and our institutions have the best of intentions and act in nonracial, colorblind, or at least racially neutral ways? Or is it because most of us in academia are white and live in a nonracialized world where we are immune to the necessity of understanding race in a meaningful way, and thus are ill-equipped to talk about it, research it, and address it in a systematic way? Do we lack race consciousness? Are we perpetuating inequity by our lack of racial awareness? In struggling with these questions and familiarizing ourselves with work from Critical Whiteness scholars (Bonilla-Silva 2013; Cabrera 2011, 2012; DiAngelo 2011; Frankenberg 1993; Harper 2012; Mills 2007; Nakayama & Krizek 1995; Sullivan 2006, 2014; Trepagnier 2006), we confronted these essential, foundational problems directly. The problem is Whiteness. The problem is systemic racism. The problem is "us."

Once we identified Whiteness as the central problem to moving any research forward, we were left with many complications, but the one that was ever-present and entwined with Whiteness was "colorblindness." First published in 2003, Bonilla-Silva's book *Racism Without Racists: Colorblind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*, identified colorblindness as an ideology that finds virtue or goodness in being colorblind, or not seeing race. Bonilla-Silva (2013) argues in the Post-Civil Rights era, the majority of white Americans see racism as something that exists within white supremacy groups and as a result does not exist within "regular," "good" white people. Instead, "Most whites assert they 'don't see color, just people'" (Bonilla-Silva 2013, p. 1). However, as Bonilla-Silva (2013) clarifies, this does not mean racism in the United States is no longer an issue. Instead, Bonilla-Silva (2013) argues, "a new powerful ideology has emerged to defend the contemporary racial order: the ideology of colorblind racism" (p. 53). While Bonilla-Silva is credited for identifying colorblindness as a theory, it should be noted Frankenberg also discusses colorblindness in her 1993 article, "Growing up White: Feminism, Racism and the Social Geography of Childhood."

By its very nature, the term colorblindness seeks to remove all recognition of skin color from discourse. If one cannot see something, it must not exist. Therefore, being colorblind is a way of interpreting information by muting all recognition of race, and as a result eliminating any connection to racism. By removing race through colorblindness, the problems of Whiteness or Blackness or Brownness, cease to exist, making the cause of any problem about something other than race (Bonilla-Silva 2013;

Cabrera et al. 2016; Harper 2012). As an ideology, or a social epistemology (Mills 2007), colorblindness creates a worldview for white people that makes the discussion of race and color not only uncomfortable, but inappropriate (Bonilla-Silva 2013).

Bonilla-Silva's (2013) research on colorblindness is based on two studies. The findings of both studies suggest colorblindness is pervasive in the United States, asserting colorblindness is best identified through four central frames; (a) Abstract Liberalism, (b) Naturalization, (c) Cultural Racism, and (d) Minimization.

Abstract Liberalism is the most important of the four frames because "it constitutes the foundation of the new racial ideology" (Bonilla-Silva 2013, p. 54). Abstract Liberalism is built on the tenets of liberal humanism, which Bonilla-Silva describes as "individualism, universalism, egalitarianism and meliorism (the idea people and institutions can be improved)" (p. 54). At first glance, this description of liberal humanism appears reasonable and fair. However, ideologies of liberal humanism were created in Europe at a time when liberalism meant "only white people were human" (p. 55). Recognizing exclusion is an important component of Abstract Liberalism because it posits "modernity, liberalism, and racial exclusion were all part of the same historical movement" (Bonilla-Silva 2013, p. 55).

Abstract Liberalism as a framework, purports racial equality through the veil of colorblindness, but simultaneously opposes policies to address racial inequity (Bonilla-Silva 2013). For example, when racial equity is called for in college admission practices and policies such as Affirmative Action are put in place, there is opposition because a change at the policy level is seen as giving preferential treatment to some and not others. In the case of Affirmative Action, issues of fairness and meritocracy are raised because advantage is given to some (Students of Color), while other students (white students) are perceived as being disadvantaged due to changes in policy. In a post-Civil Rights, colorblind era, the Abstract Liberalism argument is highly persuasive, albeit simplistic, especially when used by white people to maintain preferential access. When race and ethnicity-based issues are framed in this manner, white people "can appear 'reasonable' and even 'moral,' while opposing almost all practical approaches to de facto racial inequality" (Bonilla-Silva 2013, p. 56).

Bonilla-Silva's (2013) Naturalization framework argues issues of racial segregation are a "natural" choice made out of personal preference, not

a result of systemic issues such as housing, educational, or employment discrimination. Naturalization places the responsibility of segregation on People of Color by allowing white people to believe segregation is a natural choice because people gravitate toward likeness. Naturalization explains and drives conversations about the proverbial high school cafeteria when justifications are made to explain why all the white kids sit at one end and all the Students of Color sit at the other (Bonilla-Silva 2013). The Naturalization framework results in removing any recognition or understanding by white people of segregation as a result of political, economic, and social mandates and not driven by personal preference and individualism (Bonilla-Silva 2013).

The Cultural framework interprets racial inequality based on perceived Eurocentric cultural norms and highlights cultural or ethnic differences instead of using racial differences to explain social, political, and economic inequity (Bonilla-Silva 2013). The Cultural frame has a history of rationalizing exclusion based on perceptions of biological inferiority (Bonilla-Silva 2013). Put differently, the Cultural framework identifies non-European values and practices as inferior. For example, the Cultural frame is at work when Latinx achievement differences are seen as a result of failed parenting or a lack of cultural appreciation for education, instead of looking at the lack of access and opportunity as the cause.

Finally, the Minimization frame seeks to diminish the role racism plays in society by making it invisible (Bonilla-Silva 2013). Minimization occurs whenever racism is diminished or denied in order to maintain perception of differences in social outcomes like education, housing, employment, salary, wealth, health, and criminal justice as an individual or personal problem, instead of a systemic racial problem. Bonilla-Silva's four frames identify how the discourse created by colorblind ideology creates a powerful belief system for white people to remove any sense of responsibility for racism and racial inequality. In fact, it is so powerful many white people virulently defend the importance of a colorblind ideology and world view and see any challenge to colorblindness as racism. The failure to see color as a difference which can determine a life of dominance or oppression is a powerful epistemology of ignorance, providing protection for white people on two fronts: As a way of individually excusing complicity in racism because "I don't see race, so I can't be racist"; and as a way of "not seeing" structural racism because all people are treated equally; therefore, whatever is happening is not the result of racism (Mills 2007).

Colorblind Meritocracy

Research into white male racial hyper privilege and racial ideology in higher education found white men enter college with the strongest colorblind orientation of any study participants and are also the least likely to change their ideological orientation during the first year of college (Cabrera 2011). Additionally, white men on college campuses tend to have limited views on what constitutes racism, thereby supporting the colorblind theory on an individual level by not seeing the connection of race to systemic racism (Cabrera 2011). Four dominant racial frames emerged, suggesting participants subscribed to a modified version of Bonilla-Silva's colorblind ideology (Cabrera 2011). First, participants saw Whiteness as normative (McIntosh 1990; Frankenberg 1993). Cabrera (2011) ascribes this to the majority of participants coming from racially homogeneous neighborhoods or neighborhoods where they at least were accustomed to being in the racial majority. Second, participants indicated racism is of little importance to them indicating it is not a concern or even on their radar. According to Cabrera (2011), "most participants defined racism as some type of overt hatred or inner disdain of racial minorities, which was framed as either a relic of the past or contained within fringe groups" (p. 82). Third, most participants saw the United States as meritocratic, meaning white students believe racism is not a structural barrier for Students of Color; essentially, if Students of Color work hard they can succeed. Fourth, participants had strong opposition to race-conscious social policies like Affirmative Action. Cabrera (2011) concluded:

> Within the campus environment, specifically the campus racial climate, the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors around issues of racial and ethnic diversity, cannot be improved without addressing the beliefs of those who perpetuate racist ideologies. Institutional researchers who are assessing climate often focus primarily on understanding the experiences and outcomes of those who are marginalized on college campuses, but strategies to improve campus environments and foster equity must also consider the ideologies, behaviors, and beliefs of those who are privileged. (p. 89)

Cabrera (2011) argues the analysis "demonstrated that by leaving white male undergraduates insufficiently challenged regarding their racial selves during their first year of college, the institution inadvertently was helping perpetuate and support systemic racism" (p. 90).

Colorblindness also occurs when white students view racism as an individual deficit, as opposed to a systemic reality, corresponding to their view of white people as victims of "reverse discrimination" (i.e., perceived discrimination against white people) (Chesler et al. 2003). This echoes Bonilla-Silva's (2013) finding that there is no empirical evidence to support claims white people are discriminated against more than Black people. However, white students often believe reverse discrimination exists. When this occurs, the discourse shifts from addressing what is factual, demonstrable, and occurring—racism on college campuses—to defending false notions of reverse racism or discrimination against white people. This reframing allows white people to remain untouched by racism, and further, it removes white people from any complicity, and leaves People of Color without a forum for representation or voice.

Putman (2017) found reverse racism as a powerful discourse, examining the ideologies of 12 undergraduate students who participated in a three-day seminar on systemic racism, intersectionality, and white privilege, while identifying three ideological discourses that "work in relation to perpetuate the pervasiveness of Whiteness" (p. 513):

- Liberal Pluralism
- Meritocracy
- Reverse Racism

Putman (2017) describes liberal pluralism as a discourse built on ideologies of individualism and meritocracy. Essentially, by working hard, everyone in the US will get what they deserve. This is predicated on the ideology equal access is afforded to everyone. Furthermore, the ideologies of liberal pluralism and meritocracy frame success as an individual responsibility and suggest opportunity is made available to those who have proven themselves to be successful. Similarly, failure is attributable to individual behaviors associated with a lack of effort or ability, not to systemic racism. The definition of hard work, however, is determined by the individual, thereby allowing for different understandings of what constitutes working hard (Putman 2017). During the study, a discourse of reverse racism also was operative. Specifically, the contention by some students that not all white people take advantage of white privilege, and as a result, white people who are not taking advantage of their privilege, are experiencing a form of reverse racism. Examples were given of white

students unable to apply for particular scholarships or access programs like Affirmative Action, even though it was "deserved" (Putnam 2017).

Epistemological Ignorance

In *The Racial Contract*, Mills (1997) argues Whiteness is maintained through a social epistemology of ignorance, whereby white ignorance is a form of social cognition. This occurs because the individual and collective processes of cognition impact epistemologies of knowledge and ignorance through perception, conception, memory, and testimony, which in turn create discourse. Through discourse, we "map," or frame our perceptions, and thus come to understand the world in which we live. However, our "maps" are not neutral. Instead our maps are inherently biased toward a certain way of knowing or not knowing. Thus, our map may not actually represent the reality it claims to describe, yet, most people will seek and find confirmation of their map, whether or not it is accurate. Some refer to this bias as an ideology, whereas others, such as Foucault (1972) view it as a discourse. The common thread is the bias of the ruling group dominates the discourse through ideology and narrative. Thus, the dominant discourse frames the perception and as a result, creates social cognition: that is hegemony.

In the case of Whiteness, discourse shapes the perception of facts or what is real, or normative (Mills 2007; Nakayama and Krizek 1995; Frankenberg 2003). To Mills (2007), the normativity of racism has shifted from overt, old fashioned racism during slavery and Jim Crow to colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva 2013; Frankenberg 2003), combined with a strategic refusal to account for the past (Baldwin 1965). Memory is a key determinant of what becomes a constitutive norm. Managing memory is a key strategy of the dominant group because it allows for the formation of a group identity through the creation of a social memory and collective amnesia. Social memory becomes the dominant social story and this is what makes its way into textbooks, onto movie screens and into the discourse of popular culture. Social memory in the United States is a "whitewashed" version of history. It erases the genocide and terrible atrocities committed against Black and Brown people and elevates and valorizes white conquest. This selective editing is made possible by the repudiation of the alternate memory, which in turn reinforces the established memory as the only truth. As a result, white memory does not require correction. Instead it becomes the narrative, and over time the

enslavement and genocide of millions of people becomes the story of people who have been free for generations, but refuse to do the work necessary to improve their lives. They are not suffering because they are Black or Brown and descendants of former slaves, First Nation Peoples, or immigrants who have never had a chance at equal opportunity or reparations. Instead, they suffer because they have failed to take advantage of a land of meritocracy and rise above their circumstances, and as a result, have failed to manifest the (white) American dream.

An epistemology of ignorance is a "not knowing," which is socially constructed and includes intentional and unintentional not knowing (Mills 2007). Epistemologies of ignorance allow white people to separate themselves from the reality and ugliness of white supremacy by "not knowing" about it or maintaining ignorance about its existence (Baldwin 1965; Frankenberg 1993; Nakayama and Krizek 1995; Leonardo 2004; Mills 2007; DiAngelo 2011). This allows white people to remain ignorant and as a result, not complicit in racial oppression. White ignorance includes both "straightforward racist motivation and more impersonal social-structural causation, which may be operative even if the cognizer in question is not racist" (Mills 2007, p. 21). The non-racist cognizer may be operating under mistaken beliefs and misinformation, much of which became operative after the "transition from de jure to de facto white supremacy" (Mills 2007, p. 21). It is precisely this kind of white ignorance which is most important to understand. Importantly, the "white" in "white ignorance" is not confined to white people. Instead, it is often shared by People of Color because of "power relations and patterns of ideological hegemony" (Mills 2007, p. 22). White racial ignorance can "produce a doxastic environment" that can lead other racial ignorance to flourish as an individual's reasoning is guided by their beliefs and likely does not account for other perspectives or experiences (Mills 2007, p. 22). As a result, all people in the United States may exist on some level of epistemological ignorance as it pertains to race and racism, with the exception of those who directly experience it.

White Faculty and Whiteness

There is limited extant scholarship specifically addressing white faculty and Whiteness. To be clear, there are numerous studies focusing on the experiences of Faculty of Color and there also is research focusing on specific disciplines, like STEM, and Whiteness. However, as of this writing, we

have been able to locate only two studies specifically examining white faculty and Whiteness. As white faculty, we find this remarkable, but not terribly surprising given the exposure white faculty would experience if confronted by questions about Whiteness. Brooks-Immel and Murray (2017) conducted a qualitative study at a large, diverse, public university in an urban California bay area and examined Whiteness as a cultural practice and institutional discourse. The research involved interviewing faculty, staff, and administrators to determine how they respond to multicultural educational environments and multicultural ideals. The study found "white educators adhered to an intermittent form of colorblind racism enabling them to hold fast to the fiction race has no meaning in their lives, yet remains the single most defining dimension of the lives of People of Color" (Brooks-Immel and Murray 2017, p. 319). The study identified five "contextually embedded manifestations of everyday racism and micro constructions of white supremacy" in its analysis, to include:

- Whites subscribe to a view of racism as an individual phenomenon
- Whites take a colorblind position regarding race in their daily lives
- Whites claim people of color see race, but they do not
- Whites employ a diversity discourse of helping and caring
- Whites see race primarily as a black/white binary

(Brooks-Immel and Murray 2017, p. 319)

The study suggests white faculty uphold behaviors and practices that reinforce the importance of Whiteness and colorblindness in a multiracial educational environment. This was particularly apparent in the manner in which white people employed a colorblind ideology (Bonilla-Silva 2013) based on the idea of good (not racist) and bad (racist), which exempts them from the responsibility of racism. Also of significance, given the diversity of the institution, was white people saw themselves as not racist and "helpful benefactors of People of Color," which aligns with Trepagnier's (2006) findings that "helpful" white women behave in a patronizing manner toward People of Color. The Brooks-Immel and Murray (2017) study is significant since it suggests even at institutions that are demographically diverse, and embedded in diverse areas, where diversity initiatives are supported, the ubiquity of Whiteness is pervasive. Further, because the research identifies similar behaviors and practices among white students (Cabrera 2011), it suggests without

strategic intervention, the ways of Whiteness are reproduced and reified across institutions, across institutional roles, and across generations.

Similar findings arose from a study on how white male faculty constructed their roles as racial allies (Patton and Bondi 2015). The findings suggest participants constructed ideas of white allyship that did not align with their actions. The study also found participants focused on helping individual students address inequity (micro level), and opposed addressing department- or campus-wide issues (macro level), allowing participants to choose when and how to engage with race and racism while garnering visible rewards and accolades for male faculty in terms of being seen as "men who get it" (Patton and Bondi 2015). These benefits, then, become a form of property, advancing male faculty social standing while not being a requirement of employment or social acceptance—essentially a form of currency: "The very acknowledgement of our racism and our privilege can be turned to our advantage" (Patton and Bondi 2015, p. 506).

A second finding focused on *helping,* which when enacted by white men, can come across as a need to control and an unwillingness to allow People of Color to create their own agency (Patton and Bondi 2015). This finding aligns with Trepagnier's (2006) finding white women often take on a paternalistic, *helping* focused behavior with People of Color. While this helping behavior was not identified by the participants as problematic, it was identified as such by the researchers, further suggesting there is a silent narrative of dominance at play. The third finding was what white male faculty perceived as allyship behavior, was in fact simply appropriate and kind behavior. Patton and Bondi (2015) stress this misperception "creates the potential for Whiteness to function as a normalizing tool for how we think about ally work" (p. 509). The study concludes with "future research should focus on the role of expanding discourses surrounding white privilege, specifically the benefits of further situating ally work within the deeper understanding of white supremacy" (Patton and Bondi 2015, p. 511).

Developing Racial Cognizance and Allyship

Because of the social power held by white people, those in positions of leadership are in a unique position to legitimize claims of racism and act as allies for People of Color (DiAngelo 2011; Cabrera et al. 2016). Ally is a "general term used to describe an individual from a majority group

who is trying to step away from the confines of the majority context and is working to support a marginalized group" (Cabrera et al. 2016, p. 79). For the purposes of this chapter, an ally is a white person who seeks to alleviate the racial burden carried by People of Color by working to address social inequity (Cabrera et al. 2016). We add to this definition: an ally is a white person who takes white responsibility, and attempts to connect the concept of ally development to racially cognizant leadership development. We do this because there is a gap in research directly addressing the racial cognizance of leaders and the reduction of racism on campus. Ally development is an ongoing process of learning for white people and is an appropriate way to discuss how one becomes and sustains being a true ally by being more racially cognizant. An important issue with white allies is because of white privilege, white people can choose where, when, and how to be an ally. Understanding this and challenging racial comfort from entering and exiting when it "feels right" is an important aspect of ally development. As allies, we validate and support people who are marginalized, engage in self-reflection to discover our privilege blind spots, take risks to build relationships, notice who is absent, recognize and affirm the importance of charged conversations, acknowledge our lack of racial experience, change pedagogy to small groups, and facilitate dialogue rather than debate (DiAngelo and Sensoy 2009). In order to work toward becoming allies, white people in higher education must seek to understand the discourse of Whiteness, but also understand how Whiteness influences equity and a sense of belonging for People of Color. Further, white people must be willing to change the discourse through knowledge building and what often can be uncomfortable feedback.

In a 2012 qualitative study, Cabrera examined how white men on campus can disrupt and challenge racism as allies and suggests disruption of racism in higher education is still an understudied area. Cabrera, using Freire's concept of liberation praxis, argued it is not sufficient to criticize systemic oppression if anti-racist action and true allyship in praxis is the end goal. Instead, critique must be informed by theory, which will result in action, or the development of praxis (Cabrera 2012). To truly become allies of People of Color, white people must first understand and be aware of Whiteness, seek to understand minority experiences, engage in coursework on race, learn about anti-racist action, interact with diverse groups of people and build friendships within those diverse groups, live in racially diverse environments, and have role models that perform racial

justice behavior. These actions de-essentialize Whiteness and promote the self-identification of Whiteness within praxis (Cabrera 2012).

Specifically, the study investigated how white undergraduate males learn about white privilege and racism and how they can act against racism on campus (Cabrera 2012). Again, this study is instructive for leaders because it not only explains the complexity of the white student experience, but it identifies strategies that can be used by *all* white people to develop greater racial cognizance. Cabrera interviewed 43 white male undergraduates in their junior and senior years of college using the Detroit Area Study (DAS) and divided the group into two: those working through Whiteness and those normalizing Whiteness. As noted in the first section of this review the DAS was first used by Bonilla-Silva in his development of the theory of colorblindness. The students ($n = 15$) identified as those working through Whiteness showed:

- a systemic understanding of racism
- auto-criticism of racial bias
- support for race-conscious policies

Based on interviews, the following themes emerged: Racial Cognizance, Critiquing White Privilege and Racial Justice Actions: Developing Praxis and Work Still to Be Done. Cabrera discovered the "participant narratives illuminated the process by which white men engage and struggle with working through Whiteness" (Cabrera 2012, p. 394). The primary elements of working through Whiteness to emerge were the importance of racial cognizance through multicultural education and cross-racial contact. Cabrera (2012) found participants in the study often contradicted some foundational Critical White Studies (CWS) research by demonstrating racism and Whiteness are not necessarily synonymous. Specifically, participants who expressed greater awareness of their own racial identity and a more developed understanding of racial differences and racism were already acting as racial justice allies and "demonstrated that it is possible to struggle against racial privilege and continue to be White" (Cabrera 2012, p. 397). Cabrera attributed the higher levels of racial and identity development in study participants to racial cognizance due to cross-cultural and multicultural experiences, which supported identity development through (a) cross-racial interactions, (b) multicultural education, and (c) minority

experiences (Cabrera 2012). Cabrera argues for racial identity development among white students (and we add all white people on campus), and a personal connection to racism through Freire's (2007) concept of humanizing pedagogy is a critical and necessary component to achieving racial cognizance. A personal connection supports deeper knowledge acquisition and allows for white people to begin to understand and see how epistemologies of ignorance (Mills 2007) support and perpetuate Whiteness. This process can, and should happen in college classrooms (Cabrera 2012). However, curriculum designed to deconstruct Whiteness is often missing from multicultural education given the lack of critical examination of white supremacy in higher education (Cabrera 2012). This lack of intentional instruction and dialogue about Whiteness and race exacerbates "the students' ahistorical and astructural interpretations of race" which "allows them to view whites as victims of 'reverse racism,' thereby entrenching hegemonic Whiteness" (Cabrera 2012, p. 377). Thus, it is essential multicultural education include curriculum centered on white people. We add, this training needs to be expanded to include professional and faculty development, as well as the pedagogical development of graduate students. Further, humanizing pedagogy must be institutionalized to truly foster racial justice ally development. Single instructors in individual classrooms working through Whiteness and race with students is not sufficient. Nor will white students develop the skills to self-interrogate their roles in perpetuating racism without a systematic and holistic institutionalized approach.

To address the pervasiveness of racism, DiAngelo (2011) suggests all white people need to build the skills and the "stamina to sustain conscious and explicit engagement with race" and anti-racist, multicultural education cannot and should not be necessary only for people who interact with minorities (p. 66). DiAngelo (2011) argues education should begin at the micro level, moving to the macro level to help white people see how they are individually part of a discourse of Whiteness. DiAngelo (2011) further suggests it is important to have direct conversations about power and privilege as it provides a space for interruption "of common (and oppressive) discursive patterns about race" (p. 67). However, multicultural, anti-racist education, which leads to a change in discourse is not typically being implemented in a meaningful way, nor is there a common understanding of what anti-racist, multicultural discourse is. What is needed is a common framework for deconstructing how access and social power afforded to dominant groups (white people) and nondominant groups (People of

Color) impacts views of reality, as well as individual and collective experience. Essentially, we must define what is lacking in the discourse and then seek to amend it. They may seem obvious, but it is not generally being done.

For the purpose of this chapter, we use the term "Whiteness" as a synonym for "white supremacy." We do not do this with the intention of discursively dismissing the impact of white supremacy, or shifting the tone by using a softer and more palatable euphemism. Instead, we use the term "Whiteness" because we employ a CWS theoretical framework and CWS uses "Whiteness" extensively in the literature to describe the effects of white supremacy. To be clear, Whiteness and white supremacy as concepts do not equal *all* white people and *all* white people are not racist. Nor does this chapter focus on the overt, hostile racism and white nationalism associated with white power groups such as the Ku Klux Klan or Neo-Nazi Party. Instead, we define white supremacy as the "continued pattern of widespread, every day, well-intentioned practices and seemingly neutral policies, which white people, often unwittingly, carry out, and that maintain a system of racial injustice" (Applebaum 2016, p. 2).

Using language, even when it is uncomfortable and at times controversial, is an important step for white people like us to take if we are serious about taking responsibility for white supremacy and racism. Using the appropriate language to correctly describe a problem is an essential step. For example, we use *Whiteness* and *white supremacy* interchangeably as described above. Until beginning this journey, we did not understand, nor were we comfortable with the concept or the language of white supremacy. We knew white supremacy was systemic and connected to oppression and power, but we lived in a world where white supremacy was restricted to white power and groups like the KKK and neo-Nazis. While we understood racism was systemic and a result of historical dominance conferred upon white people, we were unable to comprehend that Whiteness was in fact white supremacy. Perhaps we did not want to take responsibility for our complicity in the system, nor did we understand the depth of the complexity of the system. It was much easier to continue believing we were personally "good," anti-racist, white people and white supremacy was something not only uncomfortable to acknowledge, but something that was limited to a few extremists, whom we would never know. Leonardo (2004) explains the importance of discomfort and the power it can have over discourse:

> Insofar as white feelings of safety perpetuate a legacy of white refusal to engage in racial domination, or acts of terror towards people of color, such discourses rearticulate the privilege that whites already enjoy when they are able to evade confronting white supremacy. As long as whites ultimately feel a sense of comfort with racial analysis, they will not sympathize with the pain and discomfort they have unleashed on racial minorities for centuries. (p. 150)

For this chapter the above literature review is ample evidence of what became our central problem as researchers: The more we sought to learn about Whiteness, the more complex and difficult it became to tease out the endless ways in which Whiteness operates. Therefore, we chose to define a different methodological path for the dissertation project, a methodology we explore to conclude this chapter.

Critical Autoethnography

The goal of all autoethnography is to strive for social justice. However, critical autoethnography pushes this further by doing more than revealing how one fits into a power structure. Instead, critical autoethnography, drawing from critical theory "attempts to deconstruct the very power structure that gets exposed" (Potter 2015, p. 1436). Potter (2015) stresses the concept of *critical* autoethnography may seem redundant given the method is already oriented toward social justice. However, as Potter asserts, it is in fact an essential addition to the methodology because it "connotes an explicit focus on how power intersects with one's personal experience and the structural forces that helped to create those experiences" (p. 1436). Potter continues:

> Autoethnographic projects related to identity and power offer an excellent opportunity for critical theories to move beyond discussing the forces of power in the sociopolitical landscape – they give us the tools to dismantle the very system that has created the power structure. (Potter 2015, p. 1436)

In sum, critical autoethnography seeks to interrogate, disrupt, and challenge hegemonic injustice and systems of oppression. It acknowledges the personal privilege and personal power of the researcher, and addresses institutional and systemic oppression by raising issues that are often considered taboo and unspoken, and as a result remain uninterrogated.

Autoethnography

Given the relative newness of critical autoethnography as a method, we found it useful to look to autoethnography for more specific guidance for the research method and process. Autoethnography as a method offers multiple forms and approaches to be employed, independently or in combination with each other. These forms and approaches borrow from ethnography and include: Indigenous/Native Ethnography, Narrative Ethnography, Reflexive Ethnography, Layered Account Ethnography, Interactive Interviews, Community Ethnography, Personal Narratives, and Co-Constructed Narratives (Ellis et al. 2011, p. 5). These various approaches share many similarities, but differ depending on how "much emphasis is placed on the study of others, the researcher's self and interaction with others, traditional analysis, and the interview context as well as on power relationships" (Ellis et al. 2011, p. 5). Therefore, reflexive/narrative approaches "exist on a continuum ranging from starting research from the ethnographer's biography," to the "researcher studying his or her life alongside cultural members' lives," to memoirs or "confessional tales" where the researcher's "backstage research endeavors become the focus of the investigation" (Ellis et al. 2011, p. 6).

Autoethnography is best understood as a form of storytelling using personal experience in a particular cultural setting to gain deeper understanding; it is essentially an illustration of a sense-making process (Adams et al. 2015). Holt (2003) describes autoethnography as a genre of writing and research connecting the personal to the cultural. By placing the self within a social context, the researcher draws on personal experience to connect to and "extend understanding of a particular discipline or culture" (p. 1). Autoethnography uses reflexive writing as a form of analysis to generate "deep and careful self-reflection" intended "to name and interrogate the intersections between self and society, the particular and the general, the personal and the political" (Adams et al. 2015, p. 2). According to Ellis et al. (2011) reflexivity and reflexive writing are essential components of autoethnography. Nakayama and Krizek (1995) suggest "reflexivity as an important direction for further inquiry" in the study of Whiteness and offer three aspects of reflexivity which they suggest may be helpful in "further examining the space of Whiteness" (p. 303).

> First, reflexivity encourages consideration of that which has been silenced or invisible in academic discussion…'White' here is ideological, as one must

> play the white game; it does not require that one be 'white'—discursively or scientifically. Second, reflexivity encourages consideration of the presentation of research and the articulation of the researchers position vis-à-vis social and academic structures…At issue is not whether critical rhetoricians or those who critique critical rhetoric have social positions from which they write, but rather how they might articulate those social positions…Following from the first and second points, reflexivity encourages the examination of the institutions and politics that produce 'knowledge.' (Nakayama and Krizek 1995, p. 304)

Autoethnographers often begin their research after an epiphany, or other life-changing experience that alters their understanding of their place in the world (Adams et al. 2015). It is here, in these moments of clarity or epiphany, when we see what we have not seen and the research begins. Essentially, this allows the research to start where the researcher is, either physically or metaphorically. Put more traditionally, it is at this point the research questions are developed and the research process begins. Through the process of doing and writing autoethnography, a researcher can show "the process of figuring out what to do, how to live and the meaning of their struggles" (Adams et al. 2015, p. 2). Put simply, autoethnography is a combination of ethnography and autobiography; and as a result, it is both a process and a product (Ellis et al. 2011).

Thus, we come to the end of this chapter exactly where our initial work on the dissertation proposal ended. For all the reasons detailed in this chapter, we as chair and doctoral candidate agreed a critical autoethnography based on confronting Whiteness was a necessary initial process to meaningfully research and address practices and policies in higher education related to equity, inclusion, and justice. Ultimately, we believe some form of critical reflection is essential for all white researchers and practitioners as it implores us to confront ourselves and the role Whiteness plays in all of our lives, as well as in the institutions where we learn and work. Higher education is a contradiction in practice: openly asserting a powerful discourse about colorblindness, meritocracy, equity, and building diverse and inclusive environments, yet failing to acknowledge that discourse and individual actors working in isolation will not change systems. We cannot simply change the language we use. We must change the way white people and white institutions act and think. People change systems, but they must first be able to see the system they seek

to change. White leaders in higher education are needed for systems-level work where we can support the efforts of People of Color in the process of dismantling white supremacy. However, if we are lacking critical race cognizance, we are not ready for systems-level work. We cannot *do* systems-level work if we cannot *see* the systems clearly. Finally, it is not enough to *see* the systems, we must understand how we *contribute* to and *maintain* these systems. In sum, we must take responsibility for ourselves, our histories, and the actions of our institutions. We must develop critical racial cognizance and the courage to name Whiteness and racism when we see it. We must stand with People of Color and we must listen.

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CHAPTER 4

Counter-Narratives as Critical Invitations for Change: Race-Centered Policy-Making and Backlash at a Peculiar Institution

Issac Carter

Introduction

Slavery is not the only *peculiar institution* in the history of the Americas and these United States. Indeed, we can observe several other iterations of *peculiar institutions*. The word peculiar, as defined by Merriam-Webster (2020), includes "characteristic of only one person, group, or thing," "different from the usual or normal," "special, particular," "odd, curious" "eccentric, unusual." During the 1800s, two-term Vice President James C. Calhoun 1824 and 1828 coined the phrase "peculiar institution," which described his attempt to justify the practice of slavery. Calhoun believed slavery was necessary for peace and prosperity in the South

I. Carter (✉)
EQ Practioner, Diversity & Inclusivity Coaching, Executive Leadership, Coaching Imperative, LLC, Miami, FL, USA
e-mail: issac@coachingimperative.com
URL: https://coachingimperative.com

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and throughout the burgeoning United States. Key to his assertions is Black/African-Americans are inferior to Europeans/White Americans and therefore are well suited for slavery. Kenneth Stampp's seminal work, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Antebellum South* (1956), directly confronted sanctity slavery and exposed the grotesque contradiction offered by Calhoun, challenging both historical scholarship and widely spread teachings of American History. Higher education shares a colonial history with slavery, and despite a lack of scholarship or teaching arguing this position, the Academy is an equally peculiar institution.

Sociologist Loïc Wacquant (2002), argues America's history includes at least three additional peculiar institutions: the Jim Crow Era, The Ghettoizing and Redlining of Housing and Urban America, and Mass Incarceration in the New Jim Crow era. Wacquant's argument requires our imperfect union to interrogate the evolution of the systems of injustice that posit *the Negro* as inferior and undeserving of the freedom democracy intended to extend. In many ways, higher education is an acolyte of the peculiar institution of slavery. The colonial colleges, like Harvard, Dartmouth, Yale, and Brown, constituting a substantial portion of the present-day Ivy League institutions, explicitly denied access to women and African-Americans, to serve only an elite, Christian, white male society (Karabel 2005; Thelin 2004). Today, while some colonial institutions have made some accommodations for People of Color and women, the colonial imperative of racism and heteropatriarchy has never ceased. Instead, higher education has developed contemporary practices to restrict access.

As such, higher education is an essential site for the work of decolonization, "given the central role of universities in social reproduction and the creation and legitimation of knowledge" (Stein and Andreotti 2016, p. 1). In this chapter, decolonization is not a single moment or particular movement; instead, it is the recognition of our miseducation and the call for demonstrated action to redress and redistribute power and resources maintained by centuries of colonial ideas, institutions, and systems. Contemporary colonial ideas within the Academy include color-blindness, meritocracy, and social distancing through public words or posts to support decolonization, while private actions maintain the status quo. Contemporary coloniality also has shifted from the direct inferiority claims of the past to the citing of cultural deficits and the inadequacies of Communities of Color to account for achievement gaps, particularly between People of Color (POC) and whites in all categories within the

university, including as students, staff, and faculty (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Brooks 2015). The manifestation of neocolonialism is evident in the curriculum, pedagogies, and higher education policy (Garcia 2017). The colonial primes of higher education institutions represent policies and practices to exclude women and POC while limiting their access to leadership and authority. Policy maintains current leadership and authority, so a crucial aspect to decolonization work in this arena is effecting change in policy. Developing decolonized policies and practices is not an easy task, and if not well trained, progressive policy-making can be consumed by the logic of colonial thinking. Critical Race Theory scholars caution higher education policymakers what often is characterized as favorable policy reinforces racial inequity (Gillborn 2005; Iverson 2007; Museus et al. 2015). The task of decolonization, then, invites readers to seek to unveil, analyze, and alter current practices to effect material change.

The seeming unwillingness to acknowledge higher education's historical roots incapacitates opportunities for transformational change. In the monograph, Racism and *Racial Inequality in Higher education* (Museus et al. 2015) the authors observe, "Racism is often discussed in ahistorical ways. Failing to acknowledge the historical roots and evolution of racism in society contributes to misunderstandings and false notions that racial progress has been steady and deliberate" (38). Also, not recognizing the historical alignments between colonialism and higher education ignores the role of policy in maintaining power and white privilege. As an example, consider after the abolishment of slavery in 1865, with the passing of the 13th amendment, Black Codes and Jim Crow quickly backfilled public and educational policy to continue privileging white supremacy. In higher education, the Morrill Act of 1862 provided each state federal funding to create land grant colleges. However, because of segregation, the Morrill Act of 1890 was passed to grant Black students "separate and equal" access to post-secondary education. Despite the expansion of access, the Morrill Acts maintained segregation and racial inequality in post-secondary education; and associated policies promoted blue-collar, manual curricular emphasis for Blacks to underscore their intellectual inferiority to whites (Harper et al. 2009; Museus et al. 2015). Although the Morrill Acts significantly increased educational access, and the 13th Amendment (along with other Reconstruction Amendments (14th and 15th) provided Blacks with expanded economic and democratic opportunities, white backlash delimited this progress with regard to state and local segregation policies.

Recent research asserts race-conscious policies are essential to decolonizing higher education (Jones and Nichols 2020). The scholars reference the Civil Rights Movement (i.e., The Higher Education Act of 1965, Affirmative Action) as examples of race-conscious policies which helped to democratize higher education. The study, *Hard Truths: Why Only Race Conscious Policies Can Fix Racism in Higher education*, stresses the importance of policy in higher education to address Black achievement gaps. However, "higher education policy is an area that is almost completely devoid of Critical Whiteness analysis" (Cabrera et al. 2017). The basic argument is absent race-conscious policies, institutions and individuals do little to redistribute power and authority. While the study mainly focuses on Black students, the authors stress the importance of creating a welcoming campus climate, as well as the need for greater diversity among faculty, and curriculum. Long and Bateman (2020) found minority student enrollment has not kept pace with demographic trends in states with bans on affirmative action. "These results imply that alternative policies and administrative decisions were unable to fully replace race-based affirmative action" (Long and Bateman, p. 1). These findings support the research of Jones and Nichols (2020) and provide a powerful counter-narrative to emphasize the importance of policy in creating institutional change.

The Campus Life of Xemanon

This chapter includes the composite narrative of Xemanon, who asserts today's college and universities share and sustain a historical lineage with the peculiar institution of slavery and require race-conscious policymaking to support and protect People of Color, women, and other marginalized groups. Xemanon's experiences represent the lived experience in higher education of multiple Black and Brown individuals within several institutional types across the country Predominantly White Institutions (PWI), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI), and Minority Serving Institutions (MSI), while also including the experiences of the author.

Xemanon self-identifies as a Black feminist. They are a critical educator, organizer, and scholar. Throughout their career, they have led many initiatives to broaden educational access and success for Students, Staff, and Faculty of Color and other marginalized populations. The critical invitation within this narrative requests not only the presence of People of Color, women, and other minoritized groups, but also white allies who

are willing to assist in the dismantling of Whiteness. The word critical draws from works such as *Intersectionality* (Collins and Blige 2016). "The term 'critical' means criticizing, rejecting, and/or trying to fix the social problems that emerge in situations of social injustice…This concept of critical is prevalent in twentieth-century social movements for equity, freedom, and social justice" (Collins and Blige, p. 39). Within the Academy, there is a need to enact policies to address the overt and ongoing oppression that governs and guides our work. Our work in this context must centralize the experiences of women and People of Color if there is to be material change to gaps in student achievement, faculty demographics, and multicultural leadership development.

Critical Methodology

To contextualize this invitation to explore alternative voices within the Academy, we draw upon another field of inquiry and analysis, Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT provides purposeful decolonizing concepts to explore power relations and marginalized identities in higher education. Methodology selection is crucial in navigating the battlefields of this "peculiar institution," and without critical attention, scholarly endeavors can come to serve and reproduce dominant modes of knowing and being. Audre Lorde (1984), in her book, *Sister Outsider*, famously warns us, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house," and can only bring about incremental change if any change at all. The use of CRT changes the game by recognizing race and racism as hegemonic and normalized through a variety of institutional practices (Crenshaw et al. 1995; Ladson-Billings 1998; Lynn and Adams 2002; Grzanka 2014). As a methodology, Solorzano and Yosso (2002) assert CRT centers experiential knowledge and counter-narratives/stories of People of Color in opposition to neutrality and dominant claims of objectivity. CRT prioritizes the lived experience of educators relegated to the margins by historical and contemporary colonial arrangements, including ongoing covert and overt racism. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1998) stresses "The 'voice' component of CRT provides a way to communicate the experience and realities of the oppressed, which is a first step in understanding the complexities of lived racism, and a first step in the process of judicial redress." (p. 14). Without counter-stories/narratives, dominant groups are solely responsible for constructing and interpreting reality, and therefore maintaining their privilege and power.

In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Linda Smith (1999) stresses counter-stories/narratives are "a powerful form of resistance" (p. 35). The use of voice acknowledges and centers the importance of the personal and community experiences of People of Color as –legitimate,– and validates them as sources of knowledge. The expression of counter-stories/narratives also helps to reconcile the incongruency of the two-ness or multiple-ness oppressed people often experience. CRT centers race and racism to provide a critique of liberalism's claimed objectivity and race neutrality, to explain how pervasive Whiteness is in its infiltration and guidance of institutional policy within higher education (Cook 2013; McCoy and Rodricks 2015). For the sake of clarity, Whiteness is not a culture but a hegemonic social concept not to be confused with the racial category of white people. Whiteness is an omnipresent racialized master narrative privileging white ways of knowing and is supported by policies and practices within institutions (Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995 pp. 58–60), such as a focus on Western-centric histories, narratives, and ways of being. Whiteness organizes society and systems to marginalize People of Color and women while privileging white people (Feagin 2006, 2010; Omi and Winant 1994). Xemanon specifically identifies and challenges Whiteness. Due to their positionality and presence, it is not uncommon for Xemanon to witness and/or experience various acts of "racialized targeting" or what CRT scholars Juarez and Hayes (2015) call academic lynching. "Academic lynching can take many forms, but its foundation is always centered on eliminating any threat to the white social order, just as Jim Crow-era lynching worked to eliminate any physical threat to Whiteness as perceived by whites" (Juarez and Hayes, p. 321). Academic lynching also involves harassment, discrimination, bullying, while seeking to mute narratives threatening Whiteness. In the following pages, Xemanon's critically examines racism in higher education, in addition to the need for race-centered institutional policies to mitigate the effects of Whiteness in US higher education institutions.

How Does It Feel to Be Invalidated?

Institutional Context

The location for this account is Institutional University (IU), a small private Minority Serving Institution (MSI), nestled in a small, suburban City of Institution within the Western US. The majority of Executive

Leadership at the school is white, as are the Academic Deans. More than 75% of the residents within the City of Institution are white. At the same time, nearly 80% of the Institutional University students are Students of Color, with Black students comprising 6% of the total student population. The percentage of Black faculty at Institutional University is 4%, while the percentage of white, tenured faculty is 78%, according to institutional data. The data also reveal there are only two tenured Black faculty members at Institutional University, representing a meager 1.6% of tenured faculty. Nationally, the percentage of tenured Black faculty for all Carnegie-classified private schools is 4% (Myers 2016).

IU historically has been unable to recruit and retain Black and other Faculty of Color. However, the campus community is not in agreement with why the disparity of Faculty of Color exists. To understand the experiences of diverse faculty at Institutional University, the institution participated in a Nationally Normed Faculty Survey (NNFS). The survey findings revealed faculty from historically underrepresented groups had lower overall job satisfaction than their white peers. Nearly 50% of women respondents, and two-thirds of faculty from underrepresented groups, including 75% of Asian American faculty, felt stress due to discrimination. IU claims diversity and inclusivity as two of its core values.

Master and Counter-Narratives

With this institutional and community context in mind, we turn now to explore the response by the Faculty Governance Committee to the results of the NNFS, and the advocacy of Xemanon to address the issues identified by the survey. It is vital to this analysis to consider both the implications of the master narrative and counter-narrative. Master narratives are by default scripts or rationale that protect the policies and practices of Whiteness and engage in the empathetic fallacy of racial progress within an institution and society as a whole. Master narratives/scripts are a hegemonic social technology[1] that marginalizes, omits,

[1] By determining which actions are legitimate and which are not, social norms, procedures, and tactics operate through two kinds of technologies: one based on discipline and normalization—technologies of power—and the other based on the care of the self and the uses of pleasure—technologies of the self. The notion of technology, as pointed out earlier, refers to an ensemble of knowledges, practices, techniques, and discourses used by human beings on others or themselves to achieve particular ends (Leonardo and Zembylas 2013, p. 159).

and nullifies the racialized experiences and struggles of People of Color. Swartz (1992) confirms this silencing effect of master narratives:

> All other accounts and perspectives are omitted from the master script unless they can be disempowered through misrepresentation. Thus, content that does not reflect the dominant voice must be brought under control, mastered, and then reshaped before it can become a part of the master script. (p. 341)

On the other hand, counter-narratives point directly to the lived experience of those marginalized and ignored. Woodson (2017) argues "counter-stories are intended to illuminate the ways in which social relationships, institutions, and artifacts are deeply and irrevocably structured by racial and other forms of marginalization" (p. 319). For purposes of this examination, policies are considered narratives with the capacity to either reinforce relations of domination and oppression or foster institutional growth and transformation.

Master Narrative—Invalidity

The IU Faculty Governance Committee, like the IU faculty, is mostly comprised of white members, and seemingly chose to refute the survey data. The committee argued the response rate of 43% was too low and as a result invalidated the findings. As a remediation, the committee conceived its own survey, and then did not disaggregate results along race or gender. Further, the committee's survey did not inquire into the feelings or perceptions of those surveyed regarding discrimination or associated stress experienced by Faculty of Color. Instead, the committee's survey focused on:

- Faculty perceptions of student challenges
- The extent to which cultural competency impacts both faculty pedagogy and faculty interactions with students
- Faculty perceptions of what is expected from them (e.g., as teachers, as scholars)
- To identify any administrative obstacles that prevent faculty from best serving our students

In short, the Faculty Governance Committee survey sought wholly different information than what was sought in the national faculty survey.

A report will be generated from the revised survey, highlighting how students are served at IU, and will provide strategic recommendations for ways IU can better serve students and ways administration can facilitate faculty to better serve student needs. Once approved by faculty, the report will be shared with the Provost, President, and Board of Trustees.

The rationale for the committee's version of the survey, as printed at the bottom of the survey, is to provide a clear and unified faculty voice: the more robust the response rate is, the more meaningful recommendations will be.

Counter-Narrative

The committee's assessment of the validity of the NNFS demonstrates a pronounced Eurocentric epistemology. It asserts there is only one way to interpret and understand the world, knowledge, and the reality of life on campus, and that includes a color-blind approach to faculty well-being and perceptions of the success of the learning enterprise (Bernal and Villalpando 2002). When the NNFS presented findings the committee did not want to share with administration, it rewrote the survey and excluded any questions or scenarios where concerns of Faculty of Color may be revealed. Further, when the committee rewrote the survey, it did not include faculty outside of the committee, so the committee essentially stipulated it was a better judge of faculty concerns than the faculty itself. The dismissive nature of this assertion demonstrates a misuse of the committee's authority to avoid the potential of *any* critique of the institution or its policies. This is further evidenced by the focus of the revised survey. The committee's version only focused on ways faculty could better assist students, with some inquiry into how administration could assist faculty in improving the learning environment, as viewed from students', and not faculty's, perspective.

In short, the committee chose to ignore the areas of inquiry suggested by a national standardized survey, which included questions regarding faculty well-being and perceptions of engagement, and instead omitted all of these and redirected the inquiry to more of a performance evaluation without any regard for documenting, or attempting to address, the real issues of an unwelcoming campus climate, and work conditions that led to the disengagement of Faculty of Color. These outcomes are consistent with the CRT definition of macro-aggressions, which tend to support a campus climate of micro-invalidation that ultimately is

detrimental to all women and People of Color on campus. A micro-invalidation is "characterized by communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a Person of Color" (Sue et al.2007, p. 274). Regardless of the respondent's percentages to the initial survey the people who responded deserved to have their colleagues and campus leadership take their concerns seriously. Given the demographics of faculty on campus, those who chose not to participate in the initial survey, were likely white, which illustrates another potential dimension of Whiteness. White faculty, constituting an overwhelming majority of faculty, can choose not to participate in the survey and as a result have the survey outcomes questioned as unrepresentative. However, again considering the faculty demographics of IU, virtually all Faculty of Color could have refrained from participating in the survey, and the committee likely wouldn't have considered the survey unrepresentative, if the response rate was deemed acceptable in terms of percentage of faculty responses. It's quite possible, if the outcome of the survey would have been more favorable, the less than 50% response rate may not have been questioned.

The practices of the Faculty Governance Committee bring attention to CRT's definition of institutional racism and micro-aggressions. Institutional racism is the failure of an institution to appropriately provide professional support and service to People of Color, as evidence by the existence of policies, and actions that disproportionately disadvantage People of Color (Macpherson 1999). To ignore, and deem invalid, the experiences of women and People of Color is a direct act of institutional racism. DuBois, in his book, *Souls of Black Folks* (1903), famously posed the question: How does it feel to be a problem? The question is not intended to ascertain how we solve the problem of race and racism. Rather the question illustrates how Blacks, Negros at that time, were deemed a problem—malignant beings existing in an otherwise civilized society. At IU, the Faculty Governance Committees deemed the concerns of women and People of Color who responded to the NNFS survey invalid.

This invalidation was exacerbated by the committee's decision to circulate an alternate survey, which limited challenges faculty encounter to student serving experiences, without regard for potential challenges in terms of faculty communication or collaboration, institutional shortcomings, campus climate, or a number of other important aspects of university teaching. Further, the committee's survey did not disaggregate the experiences of women or Faculty of Color, resulting in a colonial conception

of a "universal" professor. The committee's replacement of the national survey also inferred the survey was not objective due to a high percentage of women and People of Color reporting how commonplace discrimination is in their experience at IU. These micro-invalidations embrace myths of meritocracy, bootstrap theories, and ignorance to conceal colonial mindsets. There is an inherent danger to minimizing the significance of race and the experiences of People of Color, since it only serves to normalize disadvantage and marginalization of People of Color (Sue 2010; Forrest-Bank et al. 2015). The committee's actions only served to display and promote the everyday micro-invalidations Faculty of Color often endure in higher education.

Dancy and Jean-Marie (2014) cite a myriad of reasons for faculty perceptions of discrimination, including lack of representation for Faculty of Color, devaluing scholarship, a dearth of Mentors of Color, and intense service loads. Sill other challenges include tokenism, pressure to engage in diversity-related teaching and service, and critiques of culturally specific teaching and scholarship (Kelly and McCann 2014; Martinez et al. 2017). Martinez et al. (2017) found Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) are not immune to manifestations of institutional discrimination based on race. The combination of gender and race discrimination on campuses alters the experiences of Faculty of Color in such a manner that majority and non-majority faculty experience at post-secondary institutions is quite different (Squire 2017). These differences, in both perception and reality, adversely affect the career trajectories, satisfaction, and professional longevity of Faculty of Color.

Xemanon's direct challenge to the Faculty Governance Committee was contentious and not without consequence. Xemanon attempted to convey the need to embrace the results of the NNFS to improve campus climate. Xemanon also cited research conducted at IU a year earlier, involving observation of Faculty and Staff of Color: "Last year alone, 16 faculty and staff members left the institution, most because of harassment and discrimination at IU." There was some empathy expressed by committee members, but few would acknowledge how racism can affect faculty perspectives and productivity. The unwillingness to acknowledge race or racism, as well as attempts to present the idea of a universal, homogenous faculty, only maintains the status quo, and is absurd, if the survey was intended to have any evaluative vigor. The last paragraph of instructions for the committee-revised survey provided this micro-invalidating observation: Given the diversity disparities at IU, it is highly unlikely

to have one unified voice. However, a unified voice is achievable, especially when the voices of women and Faculty of Color are invalidated and ignored. The result of such invalidation is discussed by Harper et al. (2018) in exploring the practice of Whiteness among leadership at a Minority Serving Institution:

> Beyond maintaining the right to select survey questions and variables in quantitative data sets, whites also maintain other property rights at Cityville…Its mostly white academic deans, department chairs, and faculty maintain ownership rights of Cityville's professoriate. Therefore, they determine how many colleagues of color they want and the degrees to which those scholars remain minoritized. (Harper et al. 2018, p. 18)

The ability to render rational claims of racism and discrimination invisible is a demonstration of the power of dominant narratives. In addition to the NNFS survey result, Xemanon also was made invisible. In the words of Ralph Ellison (1952), "I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me… When they approach me, they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination - indeed, everything and anything except me" (p. 1). Feeling invisible is different from being invisible. Invisibility is an internal, collective sentiment shared by People of Color, but the flip side of this colonial coin is hyper-visibility and racial backlash. Xemanon also experienced this aspect of the colonial campus.

Backlash

This narrative does not contain a storybook ending. Instead, the coercive nature of contemporary colonialism was in full effect. Administrative executives made formal complaints of reverse racism against Xemanon, claiming the analysis of white privilege in hiring at IU undermined white administrators' leadership. The leadership of the Faculty Governance Committee introduced new policies for tenure and promotion, and as a result significantly reducing the need to create culturally relevant and responsive committees, while undermining critique of tenure and promotion decisions. Members of the executive leadership required to attend a diversity training group presented by Xemanon refused to participate without consequence for nonparticipation. Additionally, faculty and staff aligned with Xemanon were targets for backlash. Colleagues shared emails

sent by various leaders warning them to be careful supporting diversity initiatives because they still had not completed their hiring probation. Leadership engaged in mendacity, both publicly and privately, in an attempt to marginalize Xemanon's professional relationships, on- and off-campus. In as much as this chapter is an account of micro-invalidations on the IU campus, this counter-narrative also is a reality check for those interested in the work of decolonization and those interested in supporting that work. The need for race-conscious policies extends well-beyond a validating dataset or initiating a diversity hiring initiative. Decolonizing the Academy almost requires establishing and codifying protections *for* those who are hired specifically to do diversity work, or those who undertake diversity initiatives along with, or in addition to, their other campus work.

Often unsupported by institutions for their diversity and inclusion efforts, individuals can be subjected to all manner of colonial responses. Recall that universities are colonial entities, founded on the property rights of Whiteness. As argued earlier, the historical nature of colonialism and institutional oppression must be fully comprehended to understand modern-day colonial manifestations. Patel (2015) asserts, "Desiring diversity without reckoning with the core settler property interests undergirding practices of inequality fulfills appearance needs while staving off the transformation into other possible futurities. It is a desire for symbolic, but not material change" (p. 670). When those "courted" to do diversity work on campuses are later marginalized and, in some cases, criminalized for efforts associated with their diversity work, clear messages are transmitted to the institutional community. Institutional leaders establish well-defined borders to corral diversity efforts into colonial enclosures that delineate how far the institution is willing to go with diversity initiatives, while making clear what can happen to those who do not stay in line with the institution's established lineage of colonial oppression and Whiteness practices.

Race Conscious Policy

The racial composition of tenured faculty in the Academy nationwide is predominantly white. While an increasing number of Faculty of Color have been hired, there remains a significant disparity. However, despite an increase in faculty diversity, "most gains have been off the tenure track" (Finkelstein et al. 2016). Since 1933, the ratio of tenure track white

faculty to tenure track minority faculty has decreased from a 9–1 ratio to a 6–1 ratio, as of 2013 (Flaherty 2016). According to one a report from (Harper 2016), on average, 75% of tenured faculty are white. The racial disparities among tenured faculty increase with rank; 75% of assistant professors with tenure are white, and this percentage increases to 82% for full professors.

Exacerbating these inequalities is the lack of diversity among institutional leadership. The New England Resource Center for Higher education (NERCHE 2018) stresses the need for equity-minded leadership, the equitable use of resources, and representation at all levels of the institution to address the long-established inequities in higher education. The racial gaps among full-time tenured faculty and academic leadership white hegemony within the Academy compromises the experiences of Faculty of Color.

Non-white faculty must expend unhealthy amounts of physical and psychological energy to combat whiteness in the Academy. "Those subjected to workplace bullying, on average, spend half a workday dealing with, strategizing around, or withdrawing from toxic behavior" (Hollis 2016). The combination of gender discrimination and racism on campus alters the experiences of Faculty of Color in such a manner that majority and non-majority faculty experience post-secondary institutions quite differently (Squire 2017). Dancy and Jean-Marie (2014) cite a myriad of reasons for perceptions of discrimination, including lack of representation of Faculty of Color, devaluing scholarship, lack of mentors, and intense service loads. Challenges for Faculty of Color also include tokenism, the pressure to be involved in diversity-related teaching and service, and critiques of culturally specific teaching and scholarship (Kelly and McCann 2014; Martinez et al. 2017). As a result, Yun et al. (2018) assert:

> In recognizing the professoriate not only continues to be white, but the evaluation of our work and the process of tenure and promotion are based on male, heteronormative standards, we understand that systems of oppression will continue to work against us within the academy and across our chosen profession. (p. 14)

The structural and representational racism that persists in higher education is omnipresent across all institutional types, including Minority Serving Institutions (Martinez et al. 2017). There is a global need for institutions of higher education to be more intentional in supporting

Faculty of Color to address the lack of diversity at both Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) and minority-serving institutions (MSIs) (NCES 2017). One of the critical areas to address is policy, since policy determines practice. Those in charge of policy-making, interpretation, and enforcement have a significant role in supporting institutional transformation.

Faculty Anti-discrimination Policy for Personnel Decisions

For balance, all personnel decision-making bodies or individuals must acknowledge the significant systemic racial and gender-based disparities and address these inequities through leadership, policy, and practice. Institutional oppression is the collective failure of the organization not to provide adequate service and support to members of historically underrepresented groups. Therefore, becoming culturally and racially aware and appropriately responsive to the dominant white racial frame is needed in all evaluative processes, recruitment, and retention efforts. Institutions must carefully examine the discourses contained in policies, as well as critique how spaces and places on campus are used, by and for whom, and how these designations are fatiguing and marginalizing to others.

The Need for Anti-bullying Policy

Bullying can foster a climate of fear and disrespect, which severely impairs the physical and psychological health of its victims and creates conditions that negatively affect any learning and working environment. Bullying is defined as the aggressive and hostile act of an individual or group of individuals who are intended to humiliate, harm, mentally or physically injure or intimidate, and/or control another individual or group of individuals.

Researchers define bullying in the workplace as an escalating process in which one person becomes the target of harmful social acts between one person in an inferior position and another person in a superior position (Matthiesen and Einarsen 2010). Additionally, studies on workplace bullying in higher education indicate close to two-thirds of employees regardless of race, gender, or age are affected by workplace bullying (Hollis 2016). "Because bullying typically affects those with less power, 71% of women, including 86% of Black women and 68% of Black men report being targets of workplace bullying" (Hollis 2018a, p. 7). Overall,

women, People of Color, and LGBTQ populations are most often subject to bullying (Hollis and Robinson 2016).

Workplace bullying creates barriers to tenure and promotion and disrupts the ability of Faculty of Color to perform satisfactorily, and effectively impacts their career trajectory, including promotion and tenure (Patitu and Hinton 2003; Thompson 2008). The workplace issues identified as barriers to the promotion and tenure for women and Faculty of Color include lack of personal time, campus climate, review/promotion process, marginalization of research, lack of mentoring, and covert discrimination.

Conclusion

Reading this chapter or this entire volume is not a salve capable of transforming the racialized inequities within and outside the Academy. Neither is thinking, reflecting, or acting alone recommended for those committed to promoting change and challenging higher education's colonial-inscribed Whiteness and white supremacy. This invitation entails dialogical and deprofessionalized relationships at both the individual and group levels, where changes in thinking, accompanied by changed actions, are generated from relationships that prioritize the marginalized. Further, being antiracist and developing race-affirmative policies is a marginalizing position, and usually and most certainly accompanied by a backlash. However, if one can traverse the demeaning discomfort and choose the margins as bell hooks (1989) suggests, it allows for one to be open and gain a vantage from outside the system. Race-conscious policy development must begin in the margins to expose the racial inequities inherent in America's long-standing peculiar institution of higher education. Moving from the margins to the center requires both individual effort and the cultivation of coalitions to share institutional change responsibility. Authoring, advocating, and implementing race-conscious policies is a necessity to support diversity, inclusion, and equity in higher education. Without such policies, US higher education remains tethered to its colonial roots. Centering the margins situates the current state of higher education as a liminal experience, not the permanent or imminent reality we endure today. We are amidst a significant change in our society, and antiracist policy-making breaks the silence of injustice, directly confronts racism in the Academy, and speaks truth to power.

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CHAPTER 5

International Students Need Not Apply: Impact of US Immigration Policy in the Trump Era on International Student Enrollment and Campus Experiences

Zachary S. Ritter and Kenneth R. Roth

For much of the past decade, international student enrollment at US colleges and universities has skyrocketed, particularly with increasing numbers of students from China and India (IIE Open Doors Report 2019). There are a couple of reasons for this rise. First, the level of pres-

This chapter was originally solicited by and written for an edited book by a national education association. We were asked to research and report on international students and social justice in the Trump Era. However, when we submitted our final draft, the chapter was returned edited beyond recognition, removing any mention of the policies, politics, and practices causing negative outcomes. We requested the chapter be pulled from the book.

Z. S. Ritter
California State University, Dominguez Hills, Carson, CA, USA

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tige associated with graduating from one of the United States' premier universities is at an all-time high as evidenced by an international cheating ring in which 40 Chinese nationals obtained student visas by fraudulently taking an English proficiency exam (Beam 2019). While Operation Varsity Blues has grabbed national headlines for the high profile parents involved in a domestic college admission cheating scam, the quieter "Operation TOEFL Recall" illustrates the lengths international students will go for a shot at the American higher education experience (Beam 2019).

Another reason for the trending uptick in international student enrollments is they typically pay significantly higher tuition than domestic students — as much as three times more than in-state tuition at public universities (Loudenback 2016). As the costs of US higher education continue to spiral upward, international students have been a boon for many institutions on precarious financial grounds. Given the shrinking college-going demographic, and the increasing competitive landscape among institutions for available students, the higher revenue from international students counterbalances vacant seats. In 2018–2019 alone, international students contributed $44.7 billion to the US economy (IIE Open Doors Report 2019). That's almost three times what the entire National Football League, with its 32 teams, television rights, and associated merchandise, generates annually (Roth 2019). International students are big business.

However, the United States' reputation as a welcoming host for international students has taken a hit in the Trump Era. The grim realities of US immigration policies at the nation's southern border, and the images

Instead, editors ask us to resubmit a version we were comfortable with, which we did. After some time, we received a terse email from a marketing director indicating the association no longer wished to publish our chapter. We asked for feedback and were told the chapter did not "fit the focus of the book," despite editors' earlier assertions the book centered on *our* chapter. The unchanged chapter follows. As Gloria Steinem once said: "The truth will set you free, but first it will piss you off." The authors believe both to be true, and only through radical honesty can we begin to change higher education, and any other institutions that impact our daily lives.

K. R. Roth (✉)
CHOICES Project, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA, USA
e-mail: kr@kenroth.com

of overcrowded cells and reports of abysmal health conditions have dampened perceptions of US hospitality (Long 2019). Then there's the new social media questions on visa applications, the searching of electronic devices at ports of entry, increased SEVIS fees, and a proposed elimination of duration of status, (Department of Homeland Security Spring 2019), all of which increase the workload for students already dealing with separation from family and friends, acclimating to new culture, and learning to navigate a nation that in many ways makes it clear it doesn't want them here. The growing hostility aimed at those seeking US asylum from an increasingly unstable Central America, caused in large part by US neglect (Sheridan and Brigida 2019), has spilled over to include virtually *anyone* who doesn't fit what seems to be an increasingly regimented view of who constitutes an "American." This sentiment is made clear by comments from Ken Cuccinelli, acting director of US Citizenship and Immigration Services: "No one has a right to become an American who isn't born here as an American" (Ingber and Martin 2019).

The irony of Cuccinelli's remark should not go uninterrogated, given America is a nation of immigrants that displaced indigenous populations in order to thrive. Likewise, there is little reason for creating barriers for international students to study here, and doing so only seems to hurt America. Eighty-three percent of institutions reporting in a IIE 2017–2018 survey cited visa delay or denial as a major factor in the decline of international students on their campus (Wong 2019). But even when international students make it past all the bureaucratic hurdles, they still find an America that is less welcoming, that bans immigration on religious preference, and for many results in what researchers are calling "Trump Anxiety Disorder" (Zogbi 2018), a fear among international students for their safety while in the United States (Johnson 2018).

The United States once prided itself on the words: "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free," has now modified that invitation with: "As long as they stand on their own two feet and don't incur a public charge" (Ingber and Martin 2019).

As we will show, being an international college student in America in the Trump Era is becoming more and more difficult. This chapter examines the recent tightening of student visa requirements as a social justice issue in a time of increased xenophobia and isolationist policies in America. News images of Guatemalan, Salvadoran, and Mexican children in cages in makeshift detainment camps along the US southern border, in addition to a recent presidential pardon of a war criminal who killed an

Afghan boy and then posed for a trophy shot with his dead body, mark a new turn in America's (lack of) regard for those outside US borders. As these walls, real or imagined, go up around the nation, cutting off access to vital talent from abroad, they also serve to keep those already here *inside*, both physically and intellectually, for fear of losing student status if they travel abroad, or engage in any activity that can be remotely construed as anti-American.

As a result, many international students who already are studying in the United States are suffering from elevated stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues because of increasing xenophobia, nationalism, and associated intolerance across the nation (Christensen 2018). At the same time, colleges and universities are struggling to address these issues while addressing financial woes associated with a general decline in enrollment, a downturn in international student enrollment, and a global COVID-19 pandemic.

These institutions are stuck between a rock and a hard place: Between a social justice ideal of equality and access, while conforming to an *America First* reality. American higher education always has been a stalwart for the status quo *and* at the same time a site for embracing the nation's highest and unachieved ideals. Within this frame, our concept of social justice is one of *restorative justice*, in which American institutions seek to right historic wrongs through equity, access, and opportunity. However, in the current climate this is not easy to do. Colleges can admit more international students, and use their collective political capital to advocate for more lenient visa processes. But this is unlikely. Historically, it's been students and faculty, and not necessarily the institutions themselves, that have driven the embrace of democratic and progressive values. Still, we must seek greater participation from institutions and their administrations, to curb onerous application of policies and practices that only serve to diminish America in the international eye, while positioning some institutions at the brink of financial survivability.

We think it is important to chronicle this moment in time, during an influx of change and disruption, led by immigration policies and a leniency for white nationalism under the Trump administration. The authors believe it is vital to understand, bear witness to, and chronicle the abrupt turn in policy under President Trump and the implications for international student enrollment well into the future, even if the more onerous turbulence caused by this moment is neutralized in the near future. At the time of this writing, however, international student

enrollments at US colleges and universities had dropped for two consecutive years, and were trending slightly upward before the onset of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Now, many college leaders across the nation potentially view this second downturn as just the beginning of a long downward trend.

International Student Enrollment

More than 1 million international students attended US colleges and universities in the 2017–2018 academic year. However, nationalism, nativism, and xenophobia threaten the United States' long-recognized status as both an example of multicultural democratic values and the leading voice for international collaboration and diplomacy. This growing tension has a direct impact on international student choices to study in the US. From 2017 to 2019, international student enrollment in US colleges and universities dropped by 10% (Wood 2019).

Recent immigration bans against mostly Muslim nations, and tightening of student and work visas has had a direct impact on international student enrollment across the nation, and particularly from certain countries. Iranian student enrollment has dropped precipitously since the Muslim ban went into effect in 2017 (Redden 2018b). In the 2017–2018 academic year, Iran ranked 12th in the number of students who attended US colleges and universities, and that enrollment has dropped nearly 17% for undergraduate programs, and nearly 36% for nondegree or certificate programs (Redden 2018b).

Enrollment among nondegree-seeking students from Mexico has dropped 39.1% since Trump's wall-building promise of 2016. Likewise, the number of graduate degree seekers from Canada is down 5.9% in the same period (Redden 2018b). Saudi Arabian student enrollment is down 15%, and South Korean undergraduate enrollment is down more than 8%, but the Saudi and South Korean downturns may have other explanations.

Both Saudi Arabia and South Korea have invested heavily in higher education over the past decade, so more of their students are opting to stay in-country. Many of the institutions in these countries have risen in academic rankings and are less expensive than US institutions, serving both students' prestige expectations and market-based considerations.

However, the resultant jolt to the US education revenue stream may create significant sustainability issues for many of the nation's colleges and universities. Since 2016, at least 22 small predominantly private colleges

and universities have been shuttered due to an adversely lopsided balance sheet (Education Dive Staff 2019). While Trump's policies are intended to give more opportunities to US nationals, there appear to be unintended consequences, where small liberal arts colleges are closing due to a lack of revenue increasingly tied to lost international student enrollment.

At Texas Tech University, for example, undergraduate enrollment fell from 1611 undergraduates in 2017 to 866 in 2018, and from 1464 graduate students in 2017 to 1319 in 2018 (Cantu 2018). Lawrence Schovanec, President of Texas Tech, believes the decline is a sign of things to come: "[Prospective students] see the headlines and they think that they're no longer wanted in the United States." If the trend continues, Texas Tech stands to lose much of the $70.2 million dollars annually international students provide the campus (Cantu 2018).

In 2015, 644,000 F-1 student visas were issued (Leiber 2019). Two years later, that number was nearly cut in half, to 349,000 (Leiber 2019). Increasing visa delays and denials, due to Trump administration policies, appear to be the largest contributing factor to this downturn, according to university administrators. In addition, the Trump administration has announced suspending H-1B visas which allow foreign nationals the right to work in the United States in fields where there are shortages of trained American workers (Leiber 2019). These shortages are often in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) professions. This loss of access to the international brain trust may significantly affect the nation's standings in the research and development and technology sectors. The H-1B visa also has been used by some universities to avert financial calamity by increasing revenue through an increase in international student populations attracted to work-study degrees, which have been a successful workaround for some universities for Trump immigration policies. However, if the H-1B visa is suspended, the innovative university programs currently attracting international applicants to their work-study degrees will face a new downturn in enrollment.

Implications of Enrollment Declines

The drop in international student enrollment at US colleges and universities from 2017 to 2019 has resulted in a $5.5 billion annual loss to the US economy (Wood 2019). At many institutions, international student tuition subsidizes domestic student tuition, making access more affordable for low-income students. While the intent may be to reduce

international students in favor of domestic students, the loss of international students also has financial implications that affect domestic student enrollments. Local communities and associated small businesses also experience an earnings dip when fewer international students participate in the US economy.

Enrollment Strategies

Despite the increasing ubiquity of college closures, and barriers to international student access, some institutions have found novel, and also risky ways to navigate both. In Kentucky, shortly after Trump's election, the state's international student population at colleges and universities shot up 70%, increasing to 6200 students (Zhou 2018). While international student enrollment in Kentucky schools (15,240) is more modest than in more populous states, such as New York (138,750), Kentucky's increase is compelling and warrants further examination (Zhou 2018). As work-based visas have become more difficult to acquire, and immigration policies become onerous to the point of discouraging international students from seeking enrollment, some institutions have taken certain risks to survive, by developing new programs that push the edge of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations.

Kentucky

Two private Christian schools, the University of the Cumberlands and Campbellsville University, are primarily responsible for the uptick in international students within the state (Zhou 2018). Both institutions have targeted students from India interested in working in STEM professions. Developing curricula that focuses on internship experiences, the schools are attracting students who want to work with US corporations. The programs allow students to work upon arrival, and attend limited classes, as little as one weekend per semester. These enrollment numbers, then, might include individuals who tried to receive an H-1B work visa and were denied so they opted for an advanced degree program that essentially provided them the same benefits, at a higher price (Zhou 2018).

Delaware

This state's strategy centers on investing in educational infrastructure — an idea many states would like to try, but investment dollars have not been available, or directed at infrastructure. Several campuses in Delaware have invested in hiring more student affairs professionals and have streamlined institutional processes for complying with SEVIS reporting requirements. The state also has increased international student enrollment by 33% from 2016–2018 (Delaware State University News 2019). As a result, 4100 international students now contribute to the University of Delaware's total student body of 23,700 (Delaware State University News 2019). Delaware has become a leader in international student enrollment and retention by partnering with Chinese universities (Delaware State University News 2019), hiring more international admissions officers (Bies 2017), investing heavily in the neurosciences ($10.9 million in grants to University of Delaware [UD] and Delaware State University [DSU]), and tailoring graduate programs to international student needs (Bies 2017).

UD began shifting its programs to attract more international students and improve support structures and services in 2012. The university has more than quadrupled the size of its Office of International Students, from four to 18 professional staff (Ammigan 2018). The school also developed an automated prearrival orientation program, introducing incoming internationals to US academic culture, immigration requirements, and how life in America may be different from home country norms (Ammigan 2018). Institutional reporting processes have been streamlined, and the university developed a text messaging system to keep international students informed of important activities and deadlines. The school also established a buddy/mentoring program that pairs international students with domestic students through a phone app. Together, these services have helped to recruit and retain international students.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Delaware State University is a Historically Black College or University (HBCU), which provides access to a different curricular and social experience for international students. Seeking to increase revenue and internationalize the campus, some HBCUs have sought substantial gains in international student enrollment. Between 2014 and 2017, for example, international enrollment tripled at Morgan State University in Baltimore,

Maryland, making it the HBCU with the highest international population, at 945 students. Howard University in Washington, D.C. is second with 920 students, and Tennessee State University in Nashville is third with 584 (Smith-Barrow 2019). Another benefit of growing international student populations at HBCUs is the increased diversity on campuses that are often 70% Black. Maryland's Morgan State also has seen an increase in white and Latinx students, while the number of Black students has remained relatively static.

There is relatively little current research on the diversifying demographics of HBCUs but Palmer and Maramba (2015) found Asian and Latinx students attending HBCUs experienced racial microaggressions within the campus climate, providing some indication that racial tensions are not confined to predominantly white institutions (PWIs). Asian students at HBCUs have more than doubled to 4425 from 2000 to 2010, while Latinx enrollments have increased almost as much in percentage terms, from 6412 students to 12,205 during the same period (Lee 2012). At least one study found some international student athletes perceived marginalization on HBCU campuses, primarily around language competence (Sato et al. 2011). In the study, six tennis players from Brazil, Philippines, Serbia, and South Korea reported they believed language differences led to academic, athletic, and social difficulties, including feelings of being marginalized (Sato et al. 2011). The students also said they felt some of their African American peers and faculty were empathetic and supportive (Sato et al. 2011), so their perception of marginalization was not universal. The increase in international students has broadened HBCU campus diversity well-beyond the longtime acceptance of students from African nations, with significant growth in numbers of students from the Middle East and Asia. As a result, there have been some incidents of racial tension on HBCU campuses.

The Social Complexities

Research has repeatedly shown high-quality interaction between international and domestic students lowers prejudice (Ritter 2013; Gareis and Jalayer 2018). Yet, in a recent study (N = 389) by the University of Buffalo psychologist Wendy Quinton (2019), students who supported Donald Trump reported higher negative attitudes toward international students — as did white students in general. The study also found domestic Students of Color did not hold the same negative views

(Quinton 2019). As described in Chapter 9, Kumah-Abiwu asserts while HBCUs were conceived as Black institutions, they were funded and initially designed by whites, and to some degree are still imbued with Whiteness doctrine.

Across institution type, then, we argue campus multicultural and diversity centers can play an important role in promoting inclusion across culture and helping to defuse feelings of marginalization through projects and programs that provide interaction between student groups that otherwise might not have purposeful connections. These projects and programs often are geared to certain groups and situations associated with specific campuses, communities, and histories. While a detailed view of the work of these centers is outside the scope of this chapter, some institutions offer domestic–international student friendship programs, or mental health services tailored to international students. Some centers hold visa application workshops and others bridge issues of race, class, and gender through intergroup dialogue (see websites of Skidmore College, University of Michigan, University of California, Los Angeles, and University of Iowa for example).

There are creative programs schools can initiate, such as Project 196 + at Harvey Mudd College, where international students have a series of workshops to cope with homesickness, tax preparation, visa concerns, as well as friendship circles intended to ease international students' adjustment to living in the US. However, most of these programs are often triage for the larger problems international students may encounter, such as xenophobia, and the fear of harassment or attack within or outside the campus community. One author of this chapter helped to develop a global siblings program at UCLA, where international students can improve English language skills, learn American idioms, and nuanced US history and culture (AC&C, American Culture & Conversation Program at UCLA). Yet there remains continued difficulty in shielding international students from the new climate of uncertainty and anti-immigrant sentiment in the US.

And, while campus administrators speak to the importance of campus diversity and diversity training, these programs are often enthusiastically embraced, at the outset, and later demonized, scapegoated, and dismantled when they rightfully begin to challenge long-held policies and practices that center Whiteness to the detriment of Students of Color, or other national origin.

The Role of International Educators

As the number and kind of racial dustups on campus and hate crimes increase across the United States, many educators fear international students may be forgotten as a vulnerable population, since all too often international students do not seek out diversity centers or may be unfamiliar with the array or nuances of racial politics in the United States. International students also may not be fully aware of the intricacies of political and social justice language, and may not be viewed by domestic students as relevant to the ongoing racial struggle in the United States.

At this point, we ask, "Where is the growing body of literature on campus climate remedies, and reactions? How are faculty and university administrators adjusting curricula, programs, services and activities to address concerns, and avert issues?" These are the questions this chapter should raise; but given our focus is international student experiences and perceptions, we can't seek to answer these questions here and only advocate for more attention and more research, from a multiplicity of lenses, in these areas. For instance, why is so much of the resistance to international students predominantly white student centric? While instances do exist (Roth and Ritter 2016a, b), why aren't there as many conflicts between domestic Students of Color and international students? We believe this is fertile ground for further research.

Changes in International Students' Interests

Royall & Company, a division of EAB, an educational firm based in Washington, D.C., conducted a study into international student interests in attending college in the United States. When asked if the United States welcomed global diversity at its colleges and universities, more than two-thirds of respondents said yes, while one-third said their interest in studying in the United States had decreased since Trump took office (Jaschik 2017).

While there no doubt is many reasons for this sentiment, one 2017 news article highlights an area of concern for international student communities. In Olathe, Kansas, a 51-year-old white man produced a pistol and opened fire in a bar, yelling "Get out of my country!" His violent outburst claimed the life of one Indian international who had come to the United States to work in the tech industry (Karimi 2018). The increasing racial anxiety, xenophobia, and white fragility (Baker et al.

2018; DiAngelo 2018) that seems to be engulfing the nation has made some international students more circumspect when considering where to do their college and graduate work (Rampell, 2018).

White Fragility

While racial anxiety and xenophobia are likely more broadly understood terms, "white fragility" is a relatively new concept conceived by Robin DiAngelo (2018) and explained in her book of the same name. She argues the majority of white North Americans live in an insulated environment, given they typically live in predominantly white communities, attend predominantly white schools, and socialize in predominantly white circles. These circumstances construct a racial comfort and, at the same time, a low tolerance for racial stress (DiAngelo 2018). White fragility is a state where even a modest amount of racial stress is intolerable and triggers defensive behaviors, such as arguments, silence, anger, fear, and withdrawing from the "stressful" environment (DiAngelo 2018).

White fragility is prevalent across gender and age, but appears particularly acute among white working-class men who see a threat in foreign nationals with more education succeeding economically where they may not be (Hochschild 2018). White fragility has, in part, fueled the increased gun and other violence against communities of color, communities of difference, and international communities, and as a result is altering how other nations and international students view the United States (Hochschild 2018).

Discrimination on Campus

Despite a decrease in international student populations, there has been an uptick in anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, and anti-Black harassment and intimidation across the nation. In December 2016, a month after Donald Trump won the presidential election, The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) reported 1000 incidents of harassment and intimidation aimed at immigrants, Muslims, and Blacks, respectively (Lee et al. 2017). Xenophobia, when targeted at international students, has been referred to as "neo-racism" (Lee et al. 2017).

Neo-racism is discrimination aimed at a person or group based on their country of origin rather than skin color, though phenotype can still

play a role (Lee et al. 2017). The perpetrator generally assumes a position of cultural superiority. For instance, a Chinese international student may face greater discrimination than a Chinese American student due to negative stereotypes associated with the international student's home country (Lee et al. 2017). Similarly, Latinx and Chinese immigrants who already have assimilated into US culture may distance themselves from newcomers as a way to avoid their own marginalization associated with their country of origin (Cain et al. 1991; Borjas 2001; Lee & Bean 2004). A 2019 study found Asian American students were often mistaken for international students and suffered the same microaggressions in interactions with domestic white students as did international Asian students. This finding suggests a "multilayered" racism and xenophobia directed at students perceived to be international students (Yeo et al. 2019).

International Student Perspectives

Students across the United States have been confronted by questions and conflicting responses as to where they fit in within the United States. Just prior to publication, the authors conducted semi-structured interviews with five participants from a small liberal arts college in Southern California. All the students interviewed attended an equity/justice conference at a major university in Southern California, and each had given a presentation on how to improve the experience of international students on their US campuses.

Kabir, a humanities major who identifies as transgender, and is a frequent visitor to the campus diversity and queer centers, is a senior from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Kabir uses the pronouns they/them. They told us: "I just feel like, why should I stay in a country where I know half the population don't want me here?" They added, "They [half the US population], but they don't care about us."

Kabir chose to study in the United States because of its perceived openness toward LGBTQ + civil rights issues and racial understanding, noting in addition to their Indian identity, they began to identify as "brown" because they had recently learned about white supremacy, power, privilege, and oppression at their campus multicultural center. Kabir says being in the same space as some of the more politically aware Black and brown students allowed them to realize how closely their struggle for self-liberation is linked to the struggle for representation experienced by Black and brown classmates on the predominantly white campus. Trump's

attacks on transgender folks, both in the media and in policy, have caused Kabir to feel unsafe in the United States. Kabir has participated in protests on campus to promote equal rights, but fears they may be deported if they speak out too aggressively:

> I participate in more legal forms of protest, so I'll carry a sign; but I'm not going to occupy the president's office because I fear that I could be arrested and then they would take my visa because of the unpredictability of the Trump administration and just the vibe in America right now.

Kabir's case is not an isolated one. All of the students interviewed mentioned they fear for the future, fear deportation, and generally feel the United States is no longer a safe haven. They also reported they believe the political designation of a state (i.e., red state versus blue state) has implications for how they will be treated. All reported the political designation of the state figured prominently in their school selection, and all five students attend a college in a solidly blue state.

Gobi, a second-year Indian student who also is active at the diversity center, reported his father warned him not to post anything online or even comment on posts that criticized Trump. He said his father fears the National Security Agency is spying on international students who post political material and may take away Gobi's student visa. Unfortunately, this *culture of fear* seems to be a new normal in the United States, in light of tightening immigration and student visa policies. Interestingly, Gobi said he was not "political" until he came to the United States. Now, he watches every political debate and often talks about politics and race with his classmates and friends at the diversity center.

Touri, a student from Thailand, echoes the fear of losing his visa for speaking out. Like Gobi, Touri was instructed by family and others to avoid public political speech. Historically, it has been the seeming political openness of US college and university campuses that has attracted students from all over the world to study here.

Some might argue these concerns are exaggerated, that these student fears are based in a lack of understanding of how things work in America. However, in August 2019, Ismail B. Ajjawi, a 17-year-old Palestinian student who had been admitted to Harvard University, was questioned for hours at Logan International Airport in Boston, Massachusetts, after border agents searched his electronic devices and found social media posts by Ajjawi's friends they considered anti-American (Knox 2019; Avi-Yonah

and Franklin 2019). Ajjawi was initially denied entry to the United States and his student visa revoked. Immigration attorney Elizabeth Goss told the *Chronicle of Higher education* Ajjawi's case is "emblematic of the unpredictable scrutiny international students now face" (Knox 2019). "The trend is delay, deny, discourage," she added. In the past, Goss said, there were certain red flags, but these days "it's not really clear what a red flag might be anymore" (Knox 2019).

Institutional Responses

As the nation becomes less hospitable to international students, college multicultural and diversity centers are being tasked with assisting students to cope with these new realities. Increased social services, and other efforts to help students navigate often-hostile encounters within and outside the campus community have become the focus of these centers, which previously engaged in celebrating the similarities and differences of distant cultures. This response, while apparently necessary, has both financial and programmatic consequences for these institutions, while at the same time evolving the purpose and practices of US higher education.

Mental Health Services

Staffing in areas to assist students cope with systems, culture shifts, and feeling accepted has become the *raison d'etre* for most student service centers (Arbo 2018). Both domestic and international students have reported stress while adjusting to campus life, but domestic students seem to be more aware of available services (Hyun et al. 2010) and likely have a more intact support network, with ready access to family and friends than do international students. In addition, international students are less likely to seek out help to deal with homesickness or isolation. In some cultures, asking for help to deal with anxiety or depression is considered a weakness. Campus climate studies involving African American students at PWIs have borne this out in the domestic racial context (Smith 2008).

Similarly, many Chinese international students may view seeking such services as another challenge to being understood in a culture that routinely satirizes their English-speaking patterns (Redden 2019). In order to dispel these cultural taboos and biases, international centers must find ways to normalize support services by making mental health care a part of campus orientation. Students need to see staff who look and

speak like them and who likely understand their concerns and the way they perceive the situations they are encountering. Michigan State University, for example, has developed a pre-departure orientation program for students and families and offers non-English versions of its website, including one in Mandarin. The institution also has culturally responsive mental health services and provides emergency tuition assistance for students facing unforeseen financial difficulties (Farnsworth 2018).

Advocacy

In addition to increased student support services, colleges, and universities may need to take more strident public stances on issues that directly affect students, particularly international students and Students of Color. This is a time when institutions that routinely tout the importance of education for the success and function of democratic institutions must push back against state-sanctioned attacks on equality and speech freedoms, and speak out against racist violence.

For example, the University of California, and the state as a whole, has publicly and stridently supported Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students, as have other states and institutions. Additionally, a coalition consisting of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District, Guilford College, Haverford College, and other parties have filed legal action against the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) over a policy change that can "bar international students from the US for periods of 3 to 10 years if they lose status" (Schwartz 2018). On May 3, 2019, the US District Court for the Middle District of North Carolina issued a nationwide preliminary injunction that temporarily prevents DHS from enforcing a policy memo seeking to change how visa violations are determined.

In addition, at this writing, the Trump administration has proposed policy that limits the length of certain nonimmigrant statuses, including F-1 student status, regardless of whether the student has completed their course of study (Redden 2018a). If adopted, the policy prevents extension of student visas in cases where students choose to pursue additional certificates or degrees beyond the degree for which the visa was initially granted. Delimiting the extension of student status in the United States seems to have no obvious policy purpose, and instead will likely have economic and other consequences when international students are compelled to leave the United States to pursue advanced degrees in less restrictive nations.

Post-graduation Support

Reports show many international students studying in the United States eagerly seek out employment opportunities to learn American business practices, adding value to their education upon returning home. The 2019 *Open Doors* report (Institute of International Education 2018) found about 16% of international students engage in some kind of post-university work experience, while a World Education Services survey the same year found 75% of students expressed interest in such opportunities (Farnsworth 2018). The disparity between the number of students who participate in and those who wish to participate in postgraduate work opportunities has given rise on some campuses to career counseling initiatives tailored for international students.

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has created a certificate program designed to teach international students networking skills, and ways to mentor one another, as well as to navigate the US employment market (Field 2018). Students learn how to develop an "elevator pitch" and ways to frame résumés to land particular internships or short-term employment before returning home. Instructors also teach students how to target businesses and industries within a particular area of interest, as well as companies keen on engaging recent international student graduates (Field 2018).

In light of the ongoing, and some would argue growing, issues facing both international students and university administrators in efforts to make their campuses hospitable destinations for students, we offer the following recommendations.

Recommendations

To develop a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all international students, we make the following recommendations:

1. Continue to develop innovative approaches similar to those in Delaware, Michigan, and Illinois, to assist international students to have rich education and career experiences in the United States, while steering clear of immigration and visa issues.
2. Institutions must seek admission equity in terms of international and domestic Students of Color. International Students of Color should not be admitted in place of domestic Students of Color to meet

diversity goals under the assumption international Students of Color are more "valuable" or "acceptable," given their socioeconomic status.

3. Situate international student centers in close proximity to or within justice/equity/diversity/multicultural centers since there is a need to support international Students of Color with the missions and vision of all of these centers.
4. Broaden workshop offerings for international students to cover evolving SEVIS requirements, legal rights while in the United States, and explanations of and guidance on how to navigate the current US political landscape.
5. Support cultural competency among mental health professionals, including hiring more Practitioners of Color. They also should be trained to encourage international students to seek assistance, especially around stress and related issues associated with visa status and acclimation.
6. Create curricular and co-curricular opportunities for cross-cultural interactions between domestic and international students by featuring events that celebrate both domestic and international cultures and foster social justice and equity across race, religion, country of origin, gender, identity, etc.
7. Acknowledge and address issues of power and privilege on campus and assist all students to understand their role in identity formation. Start by creating spaces where students can take intellectual risks by engaging in critical dialogue on race, class, gender, and politics with people who have different perspectives.
8. Create and expand international living-learning spaces where international and domestic students can live and learn together. For some degree programs, such as Communication or International Relations, participating in international living environments should be a prerequisite for graduation.

Conclusion

A perfect storm of tightening immigration, growing xenophobia and associated campus issues, and the 2020 global coronavirus pandemic have placed a strain on international student enrollments, putting at risk both intellectual diversity on US campuses, and the loss of nearly $45 billion in revenue and associated benefit to the US economy. The loss of vibrant and

varied student bodies at US colleges and universities has implications well beyond economic and climate disturbances referred to here. The United States' response to the vast and rapidly changing environmental, cultural, and technological challenges facing the globe will determine the nation's destiny and the destiny of democracy well into the future. The world as a whole faces decisions and divisions based on scarcer resources, increasing wealth disparities within and across nations, and what appears to be a growing tribalism and authoritarianism.

Since the founding of Harvard College in 1636, US colleges and universities have been integral to the innovation and associated achievements of the men and women who have lived, worked, and studied there in search of new ways to do and view nearly everything. The combined successes of these international and domestic students have driven new technologies, new antidotes, and new ways to think and be in the world. At the same time, these institutions have engaged in and supported some of the least admirable moments in our national history, from absconding with First Nation people's land to erect colleges and universities, to slavery, and separate and "unequal" access to higher education, the latter of which persists today in new ways. Any practice or policy that puts the above achievements and potentialities in peril, or continues to scaffold ongoing inequity and white supremacy should be seriously interrogated.

Further, a number of institutions have failed or are on the threshold of economic failure due to declining enrollments. The boon of international student enrollment over the last decade has, in some cases, saved institutions from deep and potentially irreparable wounds to programs, faculty, and institutional prestige.

As educators, we need to continue the trend of internationalizing our university campuses, for the sake of every student who enters higher education in search of his or her future in the world. Narrowing students' access to the gamut of cultures, practices, people, and beliefs available on the planet only serves to diminish their opportunities and understanding of their surroundings. Now more than ever, higher education must strive to prepare world citizens who comprehend the challenges ahead and who possess the compassion and skills to seek solutions that embrace equity and diversity and don't delimit our humanity. The university in general and the US university in particular cannot allow the gains in human knowledge and understanding to be dismissed or discredited

by prevailing political winds that place nationalism, tribalism, or political economy before the wisdom of learning, knowing, and striving to be better.

The Trump administration continues its assault on international students even in the COVID Era. The administration recently canceled the visas of thousands of Chinese graduate students and researchers in the United States, who have direct ties to universities with the People's Liberation Army (Wong and Barnes 2020). The FBI claims the Chinese military-affiliated school trains some of its graduates in basic espionage and there is a larger fear Chinese spies will infiltrate our universities. But there is something more insidious happening here. The Trump administration also seeks to suspend optional practical training (OPT) for international students. Under the guise of COVID-19 fear, the administration threatens to suspend the OPT program that allows international students to stay one to two years past post-secondary education and before full-time employment (Ainsley and Strickler 2020). Julie Schmid, Executive Director of the American Association of University Professors, argues eliminating OPT does nothing to protect the United States from COVID, rather it is "just bigotry posing as concern for national security" (Ainsley and Strickler 2020).

Finally, the global pandemic has hit international students particularly hard. When institutions abruptly shut down, international students were left without their on-campus jobs and no prospects for other work. Some international students also were caught in housing limbo, forced to find new off-campus residences, during the COVID-19 US shutdown (Dickerson 2020). Some students are relying on food banks to meet food needs, and others are couch surfing at friend's homes, or have returned home, quite possibly not to return. There is a bleak outlook for international students in the United States going forward without a reexamination of immigration policy as it pertains to school and work visas, and a cessation to the xenophobic fervor that challenges the historic hospitality and tolerance of US university and college campuses.

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CHAPTER 6

Neoliberalism, Neopopulism, and Democracy in Decline: The University Under Attack on Multiple Fronts

Richard Van Heertum

Democracy in Crisis

A decade ago, democracy appeared to be in the ascendancy. There was the 2008 election of the first African American president in US history, followed by the Arab Spring in early 2010, displanting three long-serving despots while pushing reforms across the region and the expansion of rights for women, children and minorities in many parts of the world. In 2019 we witnessed a strident retrenchment of those advances, with democracy under attack on multiple fronts in the United States and across the globe. In the United States, specifically, the election of Donald Trump in 2016 crystalized a backlash that began with the Koch Brothers-sponsored Tea Party in 2010 and has roots going back to the 1980s backlash against the Great Society and cultural revolution of the 1960s.

R. Van Heertum (✉)
New York Film Academy, Los Angeles, CA, USA
e-mail: Richard.vanheertum@nyfa.edu; rjv@ucla.edu

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This followed the surprising Brexit vote in Great Britain and viable far-right candidacies like Marine Le Pen in France and Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, continuing with the rise of populist nationalist groups in Italy, Greece, Spain, and Germany, the re-election of Hindu-Nationalist President Modi in India and nationalist and anti-immigrant rhetoric across much of the developed world. Turkey, Hungary, and Brazil have elected or reelected populist, autocratic-inspired rulers that continue to undermine popular sovereignty. Egypt and others across the Middle East seem poised to accept a near full retreat from their hard fought, and bloody, foray into democracy, while Venezuela, Yemen, and Syria face outrageous suffering under tyrannical rulers with little support. And the consolidation of power in Russia and China goes on largely unabated, with the two countries having an outsized influence on the rest of the globe (and its democracies). While there are exceptions, many of these leaders rule with broad support from their citizens and recent studies have shown democratic support itself is actually on the decline across the globe (Wike and Fetterolf 2018; Wike et al. 2019). The trend continued with Boris Johnson, one of the major architects of Brexit, rising to the highest office in Great Britain.

There is, of course, widespread efforts to confront these leaders, whether it be the mushrooming protests in Hong Kong against China's attempt to further reign in its autonomy, the women's march, teachers strikes, #metoo, #BlackLivesMatter and #timesup movements in the United States, anti-Brexit Parliamentary votes in England and Puerto Rico's successful protests ending the reign of its sitting Governor, to name but a few. And some countries are moving toward democracy as others retreat, including South Africa, Mexico, and Nigeria, while others attempt to challenge the power of sitting leaders, including recent losses suffered by Erdogan in Turkey, summer protests against Putin in Moscow that led to surprise losses in local elections and attempts to overturn the reelection of Madera in Venezuela.

What is clear is the neopopulist movement continues to gain steam even among protests and occasional setbacks, with the Netherlands a perfect example of the changing landscape, its presumptive future president a young leftist who has shifted wildly to the right on immigration policy. Examining the neopopulist movement more carefully, while centered on anti-immigrant rhetoric and an atavistic appeal to white male panic, it simultaneously encompasses the same old fealty to corporate

interests and powerful elites together with the amplification of long-standing conservative attempts to undermine democracy itself. In the United States, it includes continued attempts to suppress the vote of the poor and minorities, radically skewed gerrymandering that now has the imprimatur of the Supreme Court and the influx of huge sums of corporate and rich donor money into campaigns in the wake of the 2010 *Citizens United* decision. In recent years, it has even included attempts to make protest itself illegal (Cagle 2019).

Similar reforms have occurred in other countries, though in some cases they included changes to the constitution and laws to cement the decline of democracy and the jailing or killing of oppositional leaders, activists, and journalists. What these varied movements to the right do share, is not only their hypermasculine nationalism but relentless attacks on science, truth, and any counterhegemonic knowledge that might disrupt their skewed construction of reality. In fact, one could argue this has been the major charge of the conservative revolution since its inception in the 1980s. Lessons learned from the cultural revolutions of the 1960s demonstrated the dangers of allowing too much freedom to the masses, particularly the well-educated youth of developed and developing countries. In the United States, the seemingly moribund conservatives spent considerable money and effort to establish think tanks and alternative media outlets to create the foundation for their phoenix-like rise, under Nixon and then Reagan (Brennan 2007).

At the heart of this effort was a rearticulation of the social contract toward individualism, self-interest, greed, and "personal responsibility," combined with largely successful attacks on social institutions including the media, the arts, education, the legal system and, most importantly, the role of government itself, creating a new political cynicism (Van Heertum 2011). Looking specifically at education, the rhetoric has supported schools as the pathway to success for the country and its citizens while efforts were underway to delineate both the access to and quality of education, from kindergarten straight through to the university, centered first on back-to-basics and then accountability and training future workers as means to delimit the content and scope of education available to students (Galston 2018).

The fruits of these efforts were sown with the *A Nation at Risk* report of 1983, and have only grown from there, with *No Child Left Behind*, Common Core, the push for vouchers and charter schools and federal and state cuts to educational funding across all grades. Inherent in this shift is

a move away from the more progressive curricula of the 1960s and 1970s, replacing it not with conservative ideology per se, but a back-to-basics approach that seeks to neutralize and sanitize education, together with a brilliant skewing of the educational publishing industry by taking over adoption boards in the biggest states and pushing textbooks away from more progressive themes (Ravitch 2000). At its core, these shifts appear to be an attempt to limit the bounds of information, skills and knowledge available to children and young adults, influencing their beliefs and values and, potentially, their future electoral decisions.

One could then argue the fight over knowledge and meaning have become the key battlegrounds of our age. It is not so much this war has supplanted past struggles over access, resources and power as these struggles have moved even further into the arena of ideology, and are virtually separated from the material reality of those involved. What I am arguing here is ideological manipulation has achieved a stature well beyond that envisioned by Marx and Gramsci, and even beyond the updated vision of the critical theorists of the 1950s and 1960s, where repressive desublimation within consumer culture, with needs, wants, and desires superficially satisfied by products and services, and middle-class contented discontent supplanting fear of freedom as the most powerful mechanisms of domination and control (Marcuse 1955; Fromm 1941).

Today, capitalism still channels desire through products and services that approximate deeper desires; uses science, reason, and technology to fortify domination and control in indirect ways; and deploys fear and divide and rule strategies. At the same time, it has leveraged the general discontent associated with a declining quality of life in the West, and together with an undercurrent of racism, sexism, xenophobia, and other forms of intolerance, blames progressive advances for this declining quality of life, while pushing an agenda that only exacerbates the problems, and amplifies the effectiveness of the message, over time.

This is not to argue we are now beyond the realm of radical social change, but instead to propose the battle over meaning has increasingly supplanted individuals' interests in their own social, economic, and political well-being across the income continuum. For those who do still center their political ideology on economic factors, rhetoric can supplant reality, and cynicism the possibility of progressive economic policy reform. Ultimately, the battle for resources and the social reproduction of the ideologies and economic hierarchies of a given society are still paramount, with those in power attempting to keep it and those without power

attempting to gain it, the nature of the battle has moved to the nebulous space of meaning making in a way that arguably places beliefs on an equal footing or even above material circumstance for an increasing number of conservative ideologues. As just one example, Donald Trump has consistently spoken in the language of populism, maintaining strong support with most of his base even as his policies have pretty consistently favored corporate and power elite interests above those of that base (Martin and Haberman 2019).

This battle over meaning is fortified by an attack on the legitimacy of any and all social institutions that can counter ideological manipulation and sculpting of reality. We see this in the United States in attacks on the "liberal" media, in the nature of corporate and conservative political framing, in the social media world of "fake news" and viral attack ads, in addition to attacks on education. We see it specifically in the concerted efforts of corporations and conservatives to undermine the broader goals of higher education, replacing them with a more instrumentalized, constricted and vocationalized version that seriously circumscribes the deeper goals of democracy, social justice and freedom.

Given the success in delegitimating the media, the law, the state, and schools, I argue here the university may be the last bastion, besides the streets, to combat the neopopulist turn. This is made particularly dire by the multiple attempts to undermine higher education from not only conservatives but liberals as well. Their collective goal, from opposite poles, appears to be the shuttering of the channels of critique and dissent, returning us to the age of spirituality, mythology, faith, and received knowledge. Tied into this shift is the current state of insular political and social life, where individuals increasingly subsist in a world of news, socializing and interaction that largely reinforces what they already believe, unencumbered by inconvenient truths. In the end, it is a new cynicism resistant to the idea of honest, reasoned debate, within a vibrant public sphere driven by the power of democracy to improve our lives.

While much of this book has focused on structures and practices that constrain the efforts of higher education to adapt to changing demographics and emergent student needs, this chapter examines one of the few areas in which higher education has embraced change, and how that threatens, on a number of levels, the purpose and value of knowledge production, good citizenship, and social equity. I begin with an overview of the neoliberal agenda for education in general and higher education

in particular, then turn to a hypothesis of the major elements of neopopulist policy toward higher education, before considering the ways in which neoliberal and neopopulist policies for colleges and universities converge and diverge. I situate higher education within the broader battle over meaning and the attempt to create, manipulate and capitalize on a "post truth" world where reactionary politics on the right and left appear to limit and undermine two central features of democracy: dialogue and debate.

Neoliberalism and the Push to Make Higher Education a Conduit of the Market

Neoliberalism was the dominant global ideology from the early 1990s until quite recently, and still governs world affairs across much of the developed and developing world, though neopopulist movements are certainly challenging neoliberalism's push for market liberation, government retrenchment, and dismantling of the social safety net (Van Heertum and Torres 2009). Freire (1998) was among the first to offer a profound critique of neoliberalism and its tendency to undermine critique and define itself as the inevitable culmination of historical progress (Fukuyama 1992). He argued the very nature of neoliberal educational policy scuppered the radical potential of education, instead leading it to surreptitiously serve the interests of power. Neoliberalism centers its perspective of education around a rather astounding claim, as Lois Weiner pointed out in review of a 2004 World Bank Draft Report: "unions, especially teachers union, are one of the greatest threats to global prosperity" (Compton and Weiner 2008). While surprising on the surface, a deeper examination of these 13 words gets to the heart of the neoliberal project—which is to privatize public goods, shrink the size and scope of governmental oversight and regulation and thus allow the market to mediate domestic and global relations unfettered by the institutions that dominated modernism. In attacking teachers and teachers' unions specifically, the focus becomes transforming schools to primarily serve economic aims of training and sorting future workers.

At a deeper level, it can be argued the neoliberal agenda attacks schools as ideological institutions that can challenge the discourses and rationality behind neoliberalism itself. This would explain the move to weaken the power of teachers and establish teacher-proof curriculum, and calls for

neutrality and apolitical classrooms all the way through to the university, to standardize curriculum and use high stakes testing to all but erase time for education outside its vocational and job training facets (Berliner and Nichols 2007). The new logic is schools just don't have the time or resources to engage broader social goals and should stick to the task of educating future workers.

Yet as Freire (1998) once warned, "Washing our hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral." Politics is always implicated in education, and education always serves political causes. Teaching means taking a position in the world and can serve the cause of democracy and social change only if it implicitly engages with political questions relevant to social inequality and injustice. Since education defines the content and breadth of official knowledge, what perspectives frame that knowledge and whose voices are included and excluded in learning (Apple 2004), attempting to remain neutral and balanced effectively maintains the status quo by failing to offer students alternative perspectives and knowledge claims that can broaden their understanding and offer critical tools to engage with the world to redefine it.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) largely followed the neoliberal educational reforms that had spread across the globe in the preceding 20 years, including a push toward standardization, professionalism, testing/accountability regimes and the decentralization and privatization of education (Macedo et al. 2003). While NCLB clearly worked against decentralization, Bush and many other conservatives continued to push for privatization and school choice and essentially achieved it to some degree with NCLB, in that many schools failed under the strict testing targets and thus freed parents to choose alternative educational options. Some even argued the system was set up to fail, thus furthering the push for privatization, which one might note has accelerated in the wake of the failed Act. NCLB also continued the trend of deskilling and disempowering teachers, by enforcing a de facto curriculum focused predominantly on passing tests—particularly for poor and working class schools where meeting mandated thresholds has proven more difficult (Kozol 2005; Torres 2005; Valencia et al. 2001). This is a trend that has largely continued unabated since.

The result of NCLB, together with the more recent Common Core and *Race to the Top*, is a uniform curriculum and teaching method that excises the ability to address the particularity of student populations.

Berliner makes this very case using empirical research to argue against government policy of high stakes testing because it does not work at improving teaching and learning and tends to corrupt and deskill the teaching profession (Berliner and Biddle 1995; Berliner and Nichols 2007). In the process, the focus of education moves clearly toward its economic role, focused predominantly on training and sorting. At the same time, teachers lose much of their ability to holistically educate and empower students to be good, active citizens with the skills and knowledge to succeed in all aspects of life. Thus, *No Child Left Behind* arguably succeeded in pushing education toward the neoliberal reforms already instituted across many educational systems in the world and Common Core, while arguably making the curriculum more rigorous, furthered this agenda over the past decade or so, as Ravitch (2016) argues in her trenchant critique of the accountability and choice movement.

These trends over the past 30 years are coupled with the professionalism of education. This involves attempts to replace teacher autonomy with outside experts, often from the business community, that work to "improve" the efficiency and effectiveness of schools—often by implementing business models of success that ignore the nature of education as a public good (Apple 2001). Professionalism is predicated on the belief specialization is implicitly positive, even if it means neglecting the cultural and racial specificity of schools and students and the ability of teachers to creatively construct the classroom experience based on the specific needs and interest of the students congregating there. The increasing importance of accreditation in higher education has arguably had a similar effect that includes more accountability, more oversight, more rigidity in curriculum and pedagogy and more uniformity across classes and institutions, while pushing a focus on inputs over outputs (Conn 2014). This is not implicitly negative, as it has arguably improved standards at many institutions and forced instructors to analyze their own practice and effectiveness; but in many cases it also has diluted academic freedom in the classroom and the ability of instructors to push students beyond the accumulation of facts, skills, and knowledge to the critical tools necessary to adapt to changing circumstances or to contemplate the "real world" implications of their knowledge.

These policies often frame educational reform within a corporate discourse that undermines progressive educational goals. Arnove (2005) for example highlights the ways in which new education discourse in this vein alters the very nature of debate: "human capital theory and

corporate language—such as 'mergers, hostile takeovers, commodification of distinction'—prevail in discourses about the mission and priorities of higher education." This has led to a sea change in the way we look at higher education, with many university presidents seeing themselves as CEOs of corporations that have to think about profitability and the "bottom line" before they ever consider the original mission of the university to stand as an independent source of knowledge outside of government and commercial influence. On top of this, many of these administrative leaders and outside experts have no specific training or experience in education itself, and thus base their models and theories on business rationality that does not always translate to a public good like education.

Alongside this push toward standardization, instrumentalization and professionalism are three additional shifts in higher education: an increased focus on vocational education and the needs of commerce in teaching methods and content; the infusion of business models and rationality into the relationship between schools and students; and an increasingly close relationship between universities and the private sector in research. For instance, with regard to the aforementioned accreditation and universalization, major efforts are underway not only in the United States, but across the globe, to reform academic programs through accreditation processes and strategies that produce increased homogeneity across national boundaries (Berman et al. 2013). Competition-based reforms specific to higher education tend to adopt a vocational orientation and reflect the point of view colleges and universities exist largely to serve the economic wellbeing of society (Rhoads and Torres 2006).

When we consider these reforms within the broader context of a changing higher education landscape, where state and federal funding cuts place new onus on schools, it is not surprising many have turned to corporate models and corporate funding to remain solvent. The rhetoric and discourse of economics and business culture have become common in higher education, focusing on the "bottom line," "efficiency" and "serving the business community." Corporate models of governance have been adopted and many leaders of business have risen to the top of the university power structure. This has also included increased branding and salesmanship, resources reallocated to athletics and other perks and experiential elements of college life and a general refocusing on the students' needs and desires over broader educational goals. It has included huge influxes of cash from private and corporate donors for new projects, which

often come with influence over teaching, priorities and research. And it includes a broader focus on serving student interests, which, together with the K-12 reforms detailed above, tends to alter the nature of the relationship between schools and "student-consumers" or "consumer-students," often moving away from rigor and well-rounded education toward pursuit of the satisfaction of those consumers (Tuchman 2009).

The funding shift also has allowed the corporate world to wield increased influence on the direction and focus of academic research. The beginnings of this trend were noted almost one hundred years ago by Thorstein Veblen who criticized the infusion of business principles into academia. But as outlined in a March 2000 *Atlantic Monthly* article "The Kept University," universities are increasingly not only doing research with industry funding, but actively seeking funding from these sources and in the process "acting like profit-seekers themselves." This has increased dramatically in the two decades since, as funding cuts push universities to seek funding and undertake research that is most likely to fill funding gaps and increase revenue (McCluskey 2017; Hunt 2018).

Two fields where the influence of the corporate world is most apparent are the sciences and medicine, with 80% of drug research undertaken with funding from pharmaceutical companies and the scientific research community increasingly beholden to corporate interests and potential future revenue streams from patents. In both cases, results are often strongly influenced before experimentation begins, lending credibility and legitimacy to future products and technologies. But numerous other examples also exist, including the fossil-fuel industry funneling money to universities to challenge global warming, private-prison industry representatives using university criminologists as spokespersons and economic and finance departments that spread and reinforce instrumental rationality or provide legitimacy and aid to the push for neoliberal reforms across the globe—including in the newly capitalist Eastern European economies during the 1990s and in Africa, South America and parts of Asia up to the present day. Kleinman and Vallas (2001) argued while university scientific research has always been tied to commercial and government needs and interest (most clearly during the Cold War years), more recent changes have amplified the relationship to commerce, challenging the role science can play in democratization and contributing to the common good. As with so much academic research, the problem has only deepened in the intervening years with universities themselves sometimes playing an active role in the post-truth world.

Today, research that incorporates ethical considerations and underlying structural problems is often ignored or marginalized. As Giroux (1983) argued as this trend emerged, "theory and knowledge are subordinated to the imperatives of efficiency and technical mastery and history is reduced to a minor footnote in the priorities of "empirical" scientific inquiry" (p. 87). Today questions of what *should be* or *is* tend to dominate those of what *can be*, undermining the radical potential of knowledge to empower students and improve the human condition (Van Heertum 2005). On top of this, the nature of tenure and advancement decisions in our top universities appears to disincentivize engagement in the public sphere, which too often has no positive, and even sometimes negative, impacts on both.

In a broader sense, cuts to funding as a result of neoliberal policy force universities to seek alternative sources of revenue, pushing a series of decisions arguably undermining the broader goals of the university, including: (1) Hiring and promoting professors and researchers who bring in the most money, thus putting a huge focus on income generation; (2) Disadvantaging those doing research without any serious opportunity for funding before or additional revenue after; (3) Allowing the further infusion of corporations and the elite into the university by both taking over administration and offering necessary funding with a concomitant increase in the influence they exert on research and curricular decisions; and (4) Realigning higher education employment away from a balance between research and teaching to a teaching force predominantly comprising part-time, low paid educators answerable to student evaluations. This has the same aforementioned effect as on research, while also pushing instructors away from rigor, criticality, and any pedagogical strategies that might lead to negative assessments from students. This is even truer at the most elite schools, where student entitlement puts even full-time, tenured professors at risk.

More instrumentalized notions of post-secondary education have perhaps affected the liberal arts and smaller liberal arts colleges most profoundly. As revenue and funding cuts demand concomitant program cuts, the liberal arts have often been the first on the chopping block. And, in regard to the latter, we have seen the shuttering of a number of liberal arts colleges, the reduction in enrollment at others, the merging of still others and a change in focus at those that have survived (Jaschik 2019; Hazelrigg 2019a; Harris 2018). The overarching theme that emerges from these attacks on the liberal arts and humanities is the devaluing

of knowledge not directly tied to market activity and future employment (Stover 2018; Slouka 2009). This not only devalues education as a form of personal growth and development but also the social value liberal arts/humanities education provide to social cohesion, democracy, and living more enriched lives. Can we then easily draw a line between the current insularity and strident ideological bifurcation of the country and world and the collapse of the notion of education for education's sake? I think it is more difficult to prove that case, but it seems important to contemplate how the changes enumerated above relate to the fractious, racist, and reality-resistant world we live in today.

Neopopulism and the Push to Undermine and Sculpt the Very Nature of Higher Education

Before moving on to deconstruct neopopulist higher education "policy," it is important to first define what I mean by neopopulism, particularly as the term populism has become wrought with complications given its diverse uses across and outside academia. Rooduijn (2014) extracts four minimal features out of a field of 12 commonly associated with populism: (1) the emphasis on the central position of the people; (2) criticism against the elite; (3) conception of the people as a homogeneous entity; and (4) the conviction of living in a period of serious crisis. Taggart (2000) instead locates six characteristics: (1) hostility to representative politics; (2) idealization of the "heartland"; (3) populism as an ideology lacking core values; (4) a reaction to the crisis; (5) populism as containing fundamental dilemmas that make it self-limiting; and (6) a context-dependent phenomenon.

A recent article from Brentin and Trošt (2016) provides a useful parsing of the major elements of populism more specific and detailed to the contemporary neopopulism I am attempting to deconstruct here:

1. Animosity toward elites and representative politics; and specifically the relationship and communication between "the elite" and "the people"
2. Idealization of "the people" and an idealized "heartland"
3. Absence of an ideological center and core values; "empty heart"
4. Charismatic leadership combined with demagogy and opportunism; "cheap talk"

5. A sense of acute crisis or threat to the particular group, or to society in general.

Finally, De Cleen et al. (2018) uses the work of Laclau and other post-Marxists to define populism as, "a form of reason that centres around a claim to represent 'the people', discursively constructed as an underdog in opposition to an illegitimate 'elite'." It is important to note, particularly for our purposes here, that "elite" is an extremely fluid term which takes on different forms in different contexts. For example, the first major populist movement in the United States, at the turn of the twentieth century, involved the elites in the South who owned and ran the sharecropping system and those politicians, judges, and other officials who supported the system. The people in that case were those exploited and oppressed by the system. In the 1930s, populism centered on the workers and their struggles against the capitalists, as did socialist movements for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Europe and beyond. However, starting with the conservative revolution of Reagan and Thatcher and ratcheting up in the 1990s, elites were resignified as those in the university, the highly educated public intellectuals and urbane, secular, socially liberal folks living in and near cities, who seem to all be drinking latte. That narrative, pushed by Bush, indirectly, and Trump, quite explicitly, has the ironic effect of allowing the clear power elites of our society, like Trump, Bush, or Bloomberg, to name three, to incongruously stand in as representatives of the "Common Man."

Man is, of course, an important distinction here as well, as populism is heavily invested in traditional notions of masculinity, which were a cornerstone of Reaganism and, even to an extent, Thatcherism. Both relied on a militaristic, jingoistic form of nationalism in the final decade of the Cold War to rally citizens as both leaders lowered taxes, cut social services, and set the stage for the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few over the next three decades while straining the middle class, punishing the poor and pushing racist, anti-feminist and anti-gay revanchist arguments. Masculinity is a central feature of the new populism, grounded in the notion what is needed is strong figures, and even bullies, who can pull us out of our current malaise and restore a mythologically idyllic past where everyone knew their place (particularly women, minorities, and LGBTQIA populations) and the country's citizens were largely white and European. This masculinity is apparent across the new authoritarianism, whether it is the ubermensch public persona of Putin, the blowhard, bully

Trump, the militaristic Bolsonaro, or the violently anti-drug champion Duterte (Beinart 2019).

Just as Reagan and other conservatives effectively placed the blame for the fading prospects of working and even middle-class white males on women and Blacks, Pat Buchanan initiated a new brand of conservatism that added legal and illegal immigrants as the reason for the decline of the American heartland. That narrative was very effectively taken up by Farage and Johnson in England and then, of course, Donald Trump in America, among a host of others across Europe, shifting the nature of the debate and fueling white resentment that has been building in right wing media since the election of Clinton in 1992 (Newman 2001).

The idea of an idealized 1950s past or a recent African American economic renaissance is far removed from reality, of course, but one can argue the declining economic prosperity and quality of life of the average American (and many across the developed world) has amplified feelings of resentment that have been effectively aimed at the perceived advances of Blacks, women and, most relevant to neopopulism, illegal immigrants, in recent years. As Payne points out in *The Broken Ladder* (2017), it is much easier to look at a face different than your own and center the blame for your plight there, than to aim your ire at the faceless corporation or conservative movement in general. His larger point is growing inequality is at the center of our current hyper-partisan, fractured political milieu, with neopopulism exploiting it as a mechanism to deepen social divides while solidifying political and economic power in the very hands that have been the progenitors of the growing inequality. This is coupled with the highly effective conservative discourse of a country "in crisis" and "under attack," feeding the sense of lost identity and power that many across the Western world now feel as a result of the perceived advances of women, minorities, and immigrants who have moved into the middle class and higher echelons of society. In other words, a perceived threat to one's cultural identity coupled with the very real decline in one's economic prospects has many citizens looking for someone to blame and the immigrant, the minority or women in general perfectly served this purpose, even if this blame is completely spurious.

It is important to note, as well, the racial component of the current populism is the very thing that destroyed the first populist movement in the United States, with Southern elites effectively employing racial animus to splinter the aggrieved sharecroppers along racial lines and thus allowing the incredibly unequal system to subsist for a few decades longer

(Winsboro and Musoke 2003). The reality of the situation today is quite different, of course, given Black unemployment, poverty and even home ownership (Gopol 2019) are worse than at the end of the Civil Rights era. The situation for women *has* materially improved, as has the situation for many legal immigrants and Latinos in general; but that is not necessarily the case for undocumented immigrants and, though some disagree, many economists have found a net *positive* economic outcome for US citizens, based primarily on the cheap labor undocumented immigrants provide, in addition to their spending (West 2010).

Since neopopulism is a relatively new instantiation of a movement going back at least as far as the 1890s, it is difficult to ascertain the exact contours of its plans specific to higher education, particularly given the reality it has differing and often soft ideological commitments. Still three case studies can provide a frame to hypothesize the place where this rhetoric meets policy. The first is the dire situation of the Alaska University system after dramatic cuts from the Republican Governor put state higher education on the cusp of collapse. (Hazelrigg 2019b). The second is the rhetoric and action of the Trump administration and Betsy Devos since his election in 2016. And finally, the Wisconsin University system under the tutelage of right wing darling, and ex-Governor, Scott Walker.

At this point, I would like to provide my assessment of the overarching themes of neopopulism as they relate to higher education, recognizing these are largely conjectural and based on anecdotal evidence: (1) Cut funding to schools and push for the restoration of the broad for-profit model that, as enumerated above, both instrumentalizes and vocationalizes knowledge and targets poor and minority students with an often substandard education; (2) Increase student loan debt load and limit the options for reducing that debt through public service and needs-based, lower-interest loans; (3) Following the lead and legacy of David Horowitz's Academic Bill of Rights, attack progressive educators, progressive ideas and progressive education in general in service of circumscribing the curriculum; (4) Attack PC culture in all perceived forms, using the extremes of the higher education culture to solidify a position as champions of an atavistic return to a mythological past where "real" White American males held court over the social, economic and political worlds and the "elites" were codified as those highly educated individuals that champion progressive politics (Kronman 2019); (5) Use higher education to advance an anti-feminist agenda through the support of those charged with rape versus the victims of sexual violence, along with other

attempts to diminish feminist movements in higher education; (6) Attack the sciences and research based on the scientific method, particularly as it relates to global climate change, focusing instead on suspect research fed through conservative media outlets; (7) Attack tenure, to take away Academic Freedom and hold professors hostage to an increasingly hostile school administration; and (8) Partially control the contours of what kinds of research is undertaken by controlling how it is funded.

In fact, recent research has highlighted the ways in which the richest families in America are behind so many of the attacks on science, knowledge and truth, as well as the nativist movement that ultimately put Trump in the White House. *Kochland: The Secret History of Koch Industries and Corporate Power in America* (2019) highlights the Koch Brothers' role as the key architects of the global warming skepticism movement, among other ways they have circumvented and undermined democracy to further their corporate and political interests. Walsh (2019) has provided a comprehensive list of corporate influence over higher education including the Walgreen Foundation, the Olin Foundation and the Federalist Society, among others pushing conservative and free market ideologies. A recent *New York Times* profile highlighted the central role Cordelia Scaife May, an heiress to the Mellon family's banking and industrial fortune, played in the modern anti-immigration movement. The $180 million she furnished to groups that spent decades agitating for policy reforms is essential to similar ambitions now pursued by President Trump, including militarizing the border, capping legal immigration, and prioritizing skills over family ties for entry (Kulish and McIntire 2019).

Turning to Trump administration education policy, officials at the US Department of Education just made the rather astounding claim colleges and universities are over-reliant on federal funding, while renewing their commitment to deregulation of the industry (Fain 2019). They have dropped the gainful-employment rules of the Obama era, which held for-profit schools accountable for the economic prospects of their graduates, and have loosened other rules that might lead to a revival of for-profit colleges.

This has occurred as new policies have made graduate education more expensive, including elimination of in-school interest subsidies for graduate students and higher origination fees on Graduate PLUS loans. Lawmakers also removed graduate eligibility for the Perkins Loan program before its expiration in 2017. A coalition of higher education groups wrote a letter to key senators requesting they make improvements

to these policies in the reauthorization of the Higher education Act, arguing "This trend is unacceptable and economically self-defeating for our nation as we look to globally compete with the most innovative and skilled work force" (Kreighbaum 2019). As a result, a neopopulist movement founded on xenophobia and nativism, could soon push us toward stronger reliance on foreign skilled workers for our highest skilled, highest paying jobs.

It appears the rhetoric and material effect of the conservative critiques of higher education has paid dividends with the conservative base, with a Pew Research study finding between 2015 and 2017 alone, Republicans' belief higher education has a positive impact on the country fell from 58 to 36% (Kaufman 2017). In 2019, the numbers were even worse, with only 33% of Republicans saying college has a positive effect on the United States while 59% claimed it had a negative effect. With Democrats, it is 67% claiming a positive effect and 18% a negative one, largely steady over the past six years, but overall only half of all Americans see higher education as a public good while 38% believe it has an overall negative effect, up 12% since 2012. Those who had a negative perception of higher education in the study cited admissions decisions, free speech constraints, and a general suspicion about the university's role and benefits as reasons for the decline in higher education's public value (Parker 2019).

While I focus here predominantly on the American higher education landscape, other countries appear to be following similar trajectories. China, for example, has itself pushed a new 1+X program that combines traditional college curriculum with vocational training (Ross 2019), even as both China and Japan have long been concerned their education systems produce students who excel in the STEM fields but are less equipped to deal with creativity, critical thinking, or the sort of innovative (lateral) thinking necessary to succeed in today's more dynamic, global economy. In Latin America, there seems to be a tendency toward neoliberal reforms, increased austerity, and loss of state funding for higher education systems, whether from the left or right. In Italy, quality assurance reforms begun in the 1990s have not, according to Capano (2014), provided the desired increase in autonomy but instead led to a more centralized control and a decline in the overall quality of the university system. In England, ex-PM David Cameron scrapped "maintenance grants" and raised tuition, thus hurting working class and poor students who either did not attend or accrued greater debt in pursuing higher education while a recent report by Philip Augar recommended shifting

funding from universities to "further education" and vocational training (Mason and Adams 2019).

Ultimately, the goal appears to be, as much as possible, to control the curriculum within the classroom and the kind of research pursued outside it; moving from public funding and academic freedom toward private funding, vocationalization, elimination of liberal arts and humanities, and otherwise undermining the university's potential to open student minds and instill the critical thinking necessary to embark on a successful adult life, both within and beyond the workplace. Beyond this, another potential outcome of the current course is undermining the higher order thinking necessary to discern the manipulative nature of neopopulist discourse itself, thus fortifying political insularity and cutting off the channels of common ground that can help us to collectively combat the many problems ailing us as a nation.

The Future of Higher Education in the Epistemological Miasma

At its core, higher education may well be the last bastion of hope for democracy and the common good. The internet and alternative media certainly have a role to play, as do more progressive educators, activists, social groups, artists, and other public intellectuals, but higher education stands as the most entrenched and directive of social institutions dedicated to critical thinking and analysis as a core mission in the pursuit of truth. Within the new world order, however, it is imperative we acknowledge the changing nature of truth and the role leaders on the left and right are playing in undermining the power of science and reason to cut through propaganda, public relations,, and ideology. The "fake news," post-truth world of today invites anyone to believe almost anything they like while finding plenty of confirming evidence to support their positions, as radically false and uninformed as those positions might be. It makes everyone an expert on everything within the confines of the sources they choose to engage and gives license to those in power to spread lies and misinformation without compunction, reinforcing the rather brilliant idea of Errol Morris (2011) that believing is seeing much more than the more popular version of that saying.

It is important at the same time to point out "fake news" is not a new phenomenon (Van Heertum 2016) but has been with us for as long as politicians, or anyone in power, tried to convince people to act against their own interests or judgment. In fact, the battle over knowledge

production is as old as recorded human history itself. In the early years, it revolved more around access to information, knowledge and, when they arose, private and then public educational institutions. With the advent of universal basic and then secondary education, the battle turned toward the type and quality of instruction and knowledge diverse students would receive and the incorporation of differentiated instruction into the classroom. Barriers both obvious and subtle were erected to ensure the elites continued to have advantages in access to education and credentials, while pushing the majority toward the middle and lower class vocations that needed bodies and minds supple to persuasion (Anyon 1980; Apple 2001; Bourdieu 1986; Bowles and Gintis 1976; Giroux 2004; Oakes 2008).

On the other hand, I believe there is something new about the epistemological world we live in today. Politics is arguably more insular and polarized than at any point since at least the heights of the Cold War. The line between truth and fiction has blurred to the point even the most seemingly absurd prognostications of the postmodern theorists are now part of our daily lives. And the repressive desublimation Marcuse posited, where the Middle Class accepts its subjugation in the system because it at least approximates contentment and happiness, seems to have abated substantially in the current reality, even as desire is sold with increasing fervor. The benefits of economic activity are being concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, bejeweled by the heretofore unimaginable levels of wealth they are accumulating, yet rather than the expected animus, many now treat the titans of industry and finance as the new American Gods. This leads to a rather obvious point not raised enough: as a country becomes wealthier and wealthier but has fewer and fewer quality, high paying jobs and the middle class is squeezed, it seems not only advisable but almost requisite to ensure critical thinking and education be curtailed or at least oriented toward maintaining the status quo. This can be accomplished in numerous ways, but two are outlined here: the neoliberal project of tying education as closely as possible to economic imperatives, disempowering large swaths of the public in the process, or the neopopulist project of devaluing the idea of education and knowledge itself as a purview solely of the dreamer, the "elitist" and those untarnished by the "real world" and its cynical pragmatism.

Toward this end, the delimiting of knowledge and education to focus predominantly on the student's economic future and the interests of capitalism run amok underwrite both ideologies. Neoliberalism attempts

to accomplish this through a firm commitment to epistemological positivism and economic determinism, while supporting modern globalized capitalism and codifying the status quo indirectly. Neopopulism instead focuses on epistemological skepticism and cynicism as methods to take advantage of the increasing political insularity and retribalism of our age, spoon feeding ideology to a largely uncritical audience without worry of critical investigation, critical analysis, or even rationality sneaking in to challenge their narrowing worldview.

Beyond these differences, both want to profoundly circumscribe both the teaching and research done at universities and colleges across the country, placing research in line with corporate and economic interests or their skewed worldview. Both want to control the knowledge available to students, particularly as it relates to critical thinking and civics education. Both seem intent on continuing the intrusion of corporate America into our colleges and universities and allowing the logic of business to become the logic of higher education. Both, for different reasons, appear poised to continue pushing for the end of tenure and less job security for already underpaid faculty. And both seem intent on starving postsecondary institutions of the funding necessary to meet any broader goals or aims beyond those of training workers for their future careers.

In both cases, there is essentially an attack on the broader goals of higher education, on its ability to inculcate students with the knowledge, skills and confidence to challenge entrenched power and the status quo, to push students to contest conventional wisdom and seek out their own truth, to confront and overcome the power of hegemony to push social reproduction upon us and to build a foundation for a more ecumenical, balanced, and tolerant view of the world. The point here is both the neoliberal project and neopopulist project are invested in undermining the left and progressive politics through a process of imposing myopic epistemology on the public and instrumentalizing education completely. As many have argued, including Labaree (1997), instrumentalizing education makes many of the other changes I have outlined here unnecessary, as it creates a mindset in many students that education is merely a route to their future economic success (or at least survival).

If the university is to reemerge as the last line of defense against a return to received knowledge, religious dogma and old-world traditions as the key epistemes of our age, it must grapple with its complicity in the cultural wars of our age. It must also grapple with its continued culpability in feeding the anti-PC machine, not by ceding dedication to fostering an

environment where difference is studied and embraced, but in understanding the ways in which its actions so often feed the conservative machine and the anger and alienation that profits such ideas in the public sphere. Ultimately, the university remains, as bell hooks once argued, the most radical space of possibility for democracy and social transformation. To fulfill its potential, the university must find ways to combat both the neoliberal and neopopulist attacks: to locate new streams of revenue that do not require embrace of either model; to push for student loan debt reform that allows learners to consider education more holistically; to fortify the power of tenure and other protections for professors and lecturers alike; to rearticulate erstwhile notions of the university and its role in pursuit of independent knowledge and truth; and to more closely tie it to the struggle for democracy, social justice, and the common good.

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CHAPTER 7

A Matter of Academic Freedom

Blanca Missé

Introduction

Many scholars agree academic freedom is under attack in US universities, and over the last two decades has endured a setback of historic proportion.[1] The retrocession in academic freedom rights is not an isolated phenomena; it corresponds with a wider restraint on civil and democratic liberties in the United States following 9/11, and has been augmented by political polarization over the recent economic crisis,[2] as well as a contentious assessment of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, which in large part prompted further economic turmoil.

What is often meant by the "assault" on academic freedom is a rapid increase of the number of cases involving targeted, harassed, disciplined

[1] In 2011, AAUP issued a statement pointing at the "disturbing increase in such cases arising out of the war on terror, the conflict in the Middle East, and a resurgence of the culture wars in such scientific fields as health and the environment" (AAUP 2011; Bilgrami and Cole 2015).

[2] See Hagopian (2004).

B. Missé (✉)
San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA, USA
e-mail: bmisse@sfsu.edu

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and sometimes dismissed faculty, and the growing number of issues or "danger zones" faculty are told to stay away from. There is however a deeper assault on academic freedom rights, one that has to do with the structural transformation of universities by neoliberalism, and of the institutions that sustain our democratic rights.

Recent debate on this matter has resurfaced academic freedom's material infrastructure. By the latter I mean the dismantling of the existing fragile mechanisms faculty have to defend and enforce academic freedom, beginning with the tenure system as a norm of faculty employment, which has been eroded through the rapid growth of contingent labor throughout the neoliberal period.[3] But other economic transformations have contributed to weaken faculty's intellectual, scientific, and pedagogical autonomy in universities.[4] First, the growing privatization of public universities, their increased reliance on wealthy donors, and the financialization of all universities, has given power to outside economic and political groups to pressure university administrations. Second, the growth of the neoliberal managerial model that insists in running universities as corporations, has significantly weakened shared governance.[5]

Academic freedom exists today in a paradox: while it is less and less a material reality for the majority of faculty, it continues to be valued and invoked as a necessary principle that needs to be defended and expanded in order to preserve university institutions as spaces of true engagement with knowledge production and critical ideas, and to cultivate universities as public spaces of democratic and informed debate. This chapter makes the case for reconceptualizing academic freedom from a materialist perspective, moving away from the view academic freedom must be recognized as a regulating ideal of the academic community, and instead arguing it must become primarily a *collective right* of faculty and scholars and education workers at-large, and must be continually exercised. As Judith Butler argues, a right only exists if the material conditions for its exercise can be guaranteed, and clear mechanisms of enforcement, of grievance, and redress are put in place:

[3] See Schreker (2010) and Reichman (2019).

[4] See in particular the latest book by Newfield (2016).

[5] See Rhoades and Slaughter (1997).

> The right of academic freedom is its exercise, and when it cannot be exercised, the right is correspondingly diminished.[6]

This material dimension of rights depends on their enforceability, and "*in the same way that rights exist to the extent that they can be exercised, they can be said to exist only to the extent that they can be enforced and institutionally enabled. The question of whether rights can be exercised brings up the problem not only of the capacity, but of the 'power' to exercise these rights (a doubleness preserved by the French pouvoir).*"[7]

Both the shared governance and the constitutional law frameworks have proven to be most of the time imperfect mechanisms when it comes to enforcing academic freedom rights for all faculty. I propose to turn instead to collective bargaining agreements, as a place not only to actually implement academic freedom rights, but to build faculty power and rethink academic freedom from a class and democratic perspective—one that would initially rely on but also exceed the limits of contract law.

A New Question on Academic Freedom

When common rights are under attack or perceived to be in crisis, tensions tend to emerge among those who want to protect those rights around the most strategic way to defend them. In these critical moments resurfaces the healthy questioning of the philosophical and political grounds of such rights.[8] A vivid debate on the nature of academic freedom exploded in the 1960s and 1970s as a belated response to the McCarthyist purges in universities and the imposition of loyalty oaths, and in the attempt to secure academic freedom through a reinterpretation of constitutional law, which was partially achieved in 1967.[9] It was the emergence of new grassroots movements such as the Free Speech Movement which gave visibility to the lack of academic freedom for students in the University of California, against which they pushed back.

[6] Butler (2015, p. 295).

[7] Butler (2006) p. 11. See also Butler (2015).

[8] For this debate see Pincoffs (1975).

[9] It is worth noting this debate did not start during the McCarthyist period of repression itself, but only after its trauma and the post-factum recognition that the academic freedom of hundreds, and probably thousands of faculty members had been violated in the country. See Heines (2013) and Schrecker (2010).

This debate often appears summarized as the opposition of two distinct concepts of academic freedom: the inherited conception of academic freedom—as coined by the AAUP (American Association Of University Professors) in the early twentieth century—as a "special right" or even a privilege of the learned professions, and also as an expression of self-governance, i.e., the special theory of academic freedom; and the more recent understanding of academic freedom as a particular application of general free speech rights in the context of the university, i.e., the general theory of academic freedom, which gained traction with the historic 1967 US Supreme Court ruling (Keyishian vs Bd. of Regents 385 US 589) which recognized under some circumstances academic freedom as "special concern" of the First Amendment, that is as a variant of free speech.[10] The relationship between these two concepts has been a complicated one, for as Robert Post argued "the constitutional protection of academic freedom is fundamentally unsound" and "incoherent" with academic freedom, for the First amendment "demands that 'the market place of ideas' must be safeguarded."[11] Academic freedom, however, relies on a qualitative approach to knowledge, both its content and form, and therefore excludes the neutral approach of the market economy to ideas and arguments.

This decoupling of the concept of academic freedom between the traditional AAUP formulation and its "free speech" 1960s variant was the result of an historic transformation and remains today the center of an ongoing intellectual and political debate. In the aftermath of McCarthyism, academic freedom had to be reconceptualized as a constitutional right so it could be effectively defended, and yet this reconceptualization also diluted it and presented new problems and limitations.

In the 1990s, a new debate emerged around academic freedom, this time following the "post-structuralist" critique of a well-established neo-positivist view of the University's role as producer of "objective truths," and "universal knowledge." The original AAUP concept of academic freedom was based on a functionalist view, where the function of universities was to advance science, and to produce "expert knowledge," and "academic expertise," in exchange for a special kind of autonomy. Thus the new critical perspectives from emerging fields such as women and

[10] Post (2015).

[11] Post (2015, pp. 123, 124).

gender studies, ethnic studies, critical theory, deconstruction or, cultural studies, have been viewed as implicit threats to the foundations of academic freedom.[12]

Today, the debate on the nature of academic freedom is back but not due to internal examination within the academic field regarding the norms of knowledge production, but rather as a result of the drastic neoliberal transformations of universities in the last 40 years, to include a two-tiered labor regime, new financing structures, skyrocketing costs and parallel increases in student debt, and the increasingly corporatized and managerial mode of governance. All these material transformations have deeply eroded academic freedom, which was mostly taken for granted in most of the twentieth century. Universities are not perceived anymore by the public as sites of knowledge production and education for the "common good"; but, rather, as private spaces for either profit making and financial speculation or for individual career advancement and class reproduction. In such a context, academic freedom has become almost nonexistent for many, most noteworthy being the growing army of contingent instructors that increasingly supplant the tenured few. Thus any attempt to "redefine" and rescue what academic freedom is, or rather what remains of it, is immediately contrasted and interrogated by its vanishing reality.

Some scholars, such as Henry Reichman, Judith Butler, or Joan Scott, seem to be asking "what is academic freedom?" But this time from a new and almost naïve perspective: "what is it actually made of – if anything – historically and socially speaking?" The advantage of these humble critical lenses is they don't take academic freedom for granted, or assume it is a bullet-proof reality. Instead, they examine what it might take to preserve and protect academic freedom into an uncertain future.

So, what is academic freedom made of in this moment? Is it a shared *principle* of university governance invoked by faculty and whose enforcement falls on university administrators through shared governance as the AAUP has argued? Or, is it a right, as Butler argues, and if so how shall it be enforced: by academic senates, faculty unions, or an independent association such as the AAUP? Or, finally, is it only to be viewed as an

[12] Regarding this particular the 1990s prompted by the rise of new critical approaches to knowledge grouped under the label of "post- structuralism" and "postmodernism" whose call to loosen epistemological norms and social constructs was perceived as a threat to academic expertise and thus to academic freedom. For this particular debate on academic freedom in relation to post-structuralism and postmodernism see Louis Menand (1997).

ethical ideal or practice of the intellectual community, a[13]s Joan Scott argues, that needs to be actively cultivated to recuperate a shared vision of the university as a common good? Can it be all of these, or none of the above? To move away from the philosophical scope and political foundations of academic freedom might be to interrogate precisely what the previous "definitional" approach to academic freedom presupposed: that the transplantation of the nineteenth century German concept of academic freedom to twentieth century America would yield the same results.[14] This is why we should start by briefly rearticulating academic freedom at its origins as both an historical practice and as a site of struggle, and examine both the aspirations and contradictions embedded in its initial vindication.

1915: A "Declaration" of Academic Freedom

Academic freedom, understood as *"freedom of inquiry and research; freedom of teaching within the university or college; and freedom of extra-mural utterance and action*" was first formulated by the AAUP in its 1915 *Declaration of Principles* as a necessary protection to ensure the "social function" or high "purposes" of both scholars and universities, which were distilled to three: "*promote inquiry and advance the sum of human knowledge*," "*provide general instruction to the students*" and "*develop experts for various branches of the public service*."[15] As Barrow has showed, the declaration was issued in a particular context, that of the consolidation of American universities as an integral part of the "corporate ideal" which consolidated American capitalism as a dominant power controlled by big industrial and financial trusts at the turn of the century.[16] The university was then transformed into a "corporation of learning" aimed at realizing "a class-political program" of the rising business magnates of large trusts

[13] "The fight for academic freedom, I argue, cannot take place on the grounds of that freedom alone; without some concept of the common good, as Dewey and his fellow Progressives articulated it, academic freedom will not survive. Those of us looking to (re) articulate some notion of a common good need academic freedom to protect the spaces of our critical inquiry. In turn, the survival of the concept of academic freedom depends on our ability to come up with that rearticulation" Scott (2019, p. 4).

[14] See Metzger (1955).

[15] AAUP (1915).

[16] Barrow (1990, pp. 12–30).

and corporations: that of becoming the new owners of major research universities by taking over the boards of trustees to "conquer ideological power."[17] These were, as Barrow argued, the "historical origins" of the demand for academic freedom, which appeared "*almost exclusively as an element of the fundamental class conflicts associated with the development of advanced capitalism*." As Barrow has shown, most of the disciplinary cases involving violations of academic freedom in the early twentieth century, and which led to the 1915 *Declaration* were the ones involving the clear commitment from corporate university boards to prevent "*an alliance between social theory and political action by legitimating the new demands of farmers and laborers as sound social science*."[18]

The 1915 AAUP *Declaration* in this regard can be seen as an act of resistance to the attempt to transform the universities into total corporations, where faculty members would simply be employees at will, that are deprived of any autonomy or agency in the exercise of teaching and research. Put in Marxist terms, the fight for academic freedom initially was what Barrow argued was a fight for partial control over the faculty's intellectual "labor process."[19] The difference between being "employees" or workers, and "professionals" lie precisely in "*self-management of the labor process.*"[20] However, autonomy in the labor process means little if the relations of production and ownership are left intact. That is, when faculty are continually deprived of the means to adequately do their job, and to collectively deliberate and decide on the educational goals and policies of their own institutions, especially the allocation of its resources. By imagining themselves as professionals only, while structurally remaining employees, the initial AAUP framework (which today is still the mindset of many faculty at Ivy League and private institutions) preempted all necessary discussion of the implications of the latter hidden status—being a mere at-will employee—upon the projected autonomy of the higher education professional.

The 1915 foundational declaration is thus a contradictory one, for it contains both the radical horizon opened by this claim for autonomy and "self-management," and also a liberal conception of academic freedom

[17] Barrow, p. 14.

[18] Ibid., pp. 186–187.

[19] Barrow, p. 13.

[20] Ibid.

that is adjusted to the corporate ideal of the university, and thus drastically curtails the scope and enforcement of such an autonomy. Academic freedom's first material existence was in the form of a "declaration," and that carried important implications. If we look closely at the original 1915 AAUP formulation, the term "right" is only used once, and in its single appearance is ineluctably accompanied by a reminder of its "corresponding duties." In fact, academic freedom is originally defined mainly as a "principle" with several "applications," a principle whose foundations are taken for granted.

This declaration, signed by a committee of 15 faculty members appointed by the President of the AAUP, was intended to function symbolically in a manner akin to the 1789 *Declaration of Human Rights* in France—as a document claiming constituent authority, and intended to serve as a normative framework for future legislation. The logic of the 1789 declaration and of the declarative mode in general is a paradoxical one: it affirms the pre-existence of natural rights it invokes as universal evidence, and yet at the same time it is a performative act in itself. By proclaiming these natural rights as rights, it enables their constitutive power.[21] The 1789 Declaration was to be the constituent foundation and prelude to an impending *Constitution* which was voted on four years later, and while the declaration was to establish the new constituent authority of the coming law of the people's Republic, the law itself was only delivered later. The full historical significance of the August 1789 declaration was dependent on and realized retroactively by the convening of the Constituent Assembly (1789–1791) as a new sovereign body, amid the approval of the first French Constitution. In the case of academic freedom, two key questions remain: whether and when academic freedom ever became a text of law, based on the principles the AAUP proclaimed, and whether faculty constituted themselves as a real sovereign subject when they released the 1915 declaration.[22]

[21] See Burdeau, "Déclarations des droits", *Encyclopédie Universalis*. See Baker, "The Idea of a Declaration of Rights."

[22] Like Lafayette and later Guizot asserted in the French case, the *Declaration* was intended to have pedagogical purposes to "say what everyone knows and what everyone feels," to allow everyone, in a Rousseauist vein, to reconnect with a universal but hidden (or corrupted) nature. Danger of the reification of Nature. Equivalent danger in the reification of knowledge faculty claim to be the depositories.

The 1915 AAUP *Declaration* sets up the political fiction that the university was a republic within the republic that is a self-contained and self-regulated republic of knowledge within a broader (and potentially hostile) republic. This political fiction is not new, it was laid out through a formula of a "*Republic of Letters*," in seventeenth Century Europe by dissident protestant and libertine intellectuals to assert a form of autonomy from the French and Prussian monarchies.[23]

Indeed, the 1920 AAUP *Report of Committee T* (On Tenure) further outlines the constitution and government form of this academic republic in the following manner: "*the faculty should be the legislative body for all matters concerning the educational policy of the university*," and the Board of Trustees and President should function as the executive branch: "*the president of a university should be its educational and its chief administrative officer*."[24] It is worth noting in this academic republic the faculty neither makes decisions on budget, nor does it directly elect the President (with few notable exceptions like Oberlin or Wesleyan), or has autonomy in the hiring and firing of faculty, for "*the consent of the president should be necessary to all appointments to, and dismissals from, the instructional staff*."[25] Faculty's legislative powers are thus restricted to matters of self-governance that is matters of internal regulation of faculty activities, and not key matters of university governance, such as what should be the goals, policies, system of governance and allocation of resources within the university.

The first section, the "General Declaration of Principles" naturalizes academic freedom as a pre-existing almost metaphysical principle that manifests itself through its particular "applications": "*the term 'academic freedom' has traditionally had two applications – to the freedom of the teacher and to that of the student… Academic freedom in this sense comprises three elements: freedom of inquiry and research; freedom of teaching within the university or college; and freedom of extramural utterance and action*."[26] By presenting academic freedom as a traditional

[23] On the Early modern idea of the republic of letters see Brockliss (2002), Casanova (2004), Goodman (1994), and Daston (1991).

[24] Leighton (1920).

[25] p. 28.

[26] AAUP (1915, p. 292).

principle, abstracted from its history of struggle in Germany—for historians have argued that such a freedom "*was the fruit of a struggle lasting for centuries*"[27]—it transplants a living social process into a technocratic and managerial framework: that of finding the right technical protocols to adjust and apply academic freedom within US institutions.

The *Declaration* further states the basis for this special kind of freedom in a functionalist view of society: "*the importance of academic freedom is most clearly perceived in the light of the purposes for which universities exist. There are three in number: a. to promote inquiry and advance the sum of human knowledge; b. to provide general instruction to the students; and c. to develop experts for various branches of the public service.*"[28] Interestingly, academic freedom is not a pre-existing principle but a byproduct of a particular kind of institution, the corporate university, in a particular kind of society, a capitalist one.

The fact the AAUP Declaration has largely remained a declarative fiction and did not immediately an completely translate into enforceable law, is not a reason to discard the claim for sovereignty behind it. In fact, the AAUP imperfect political fiction of the declaration of rights also allows us to delve into a speculation of what that *Declaration* could have been if embedded in a different social and political reality, or rather what it could be if its potential could be fully realized today if we were to transform universities altogether. The French Revolution historian Keith Baker has analyzed the political breakthrough implied in the eighteenth century "idea of a declaration of rights." Baker argued the greatness of the French and American Revolutions, as theorized by Sieyes, was to see in the act of declaration a republican form of self-determination and the institution of an autonomous power. The American revolution was the first to break with the contractual model of power that is "implicit recognition of a seigneur, a suzerain or a master to whom one is naturally obligated" and overcomes the horizon of political treaties or agreements as merely being "pacts between two contending powers who wished to demarcate the boundaries between their respective rights and prerogatives."[29] Yet, while the American Revolution was able to toss off the yoke of despotism by also refusing to recognize the power of the British Empire, it

[27] Lodewyckx (1941).

[28] AAUP 1915, p. 295).

[29] Baker (1994, p. 96).

remained caught in an "image" of power as totalizing and inherently tyrannical. Because it was marked by "the same spirit of suspicion" Baker argues, it limited the scope and self-determining force of the new government by reintroducing internally a contractual model (through the Bill of Rights) so states could "counter-act" and "balance" the power of the federal government through their own power. Sieyes thought this mistrust of the newly established government in the American case was a mistake, and as Baker put it, the "symptom" of an incomplete revolution, for by limiting the power of the government, the "people" were limiting their own constituent power. In short the historical process of the American Revolution immediately separated the people's constituent power from their government, and set a contractual model to regulate what is today still perceived as a risk of "unbalanced" power and political subjugation. The *Bill of Rights* immediately appended to the Constitution effectively split the subject of enunciation of the Constitution itself. Between government and citizens there was no longer the continuity established by "We the People," but the threat that the "representatives" in government could easily become the new "rulers" of the citizens, and not their "servants" anymore. It further presupposed an ineluctable divide between the people and their representatives.

The initial AAUP declaration contained two obstacles preventing the transformation of its political fiction of autonomy into an enforceable law. The first one is as the unresolved character of the superposition of normative frameworks, that of the university and of the State. The second one is the delegation of power to an *executive alien* often opposed to faculty interests: the corporate managers of universities.

First, the *Declaration of Principles* leaves out a crucial point, and that is its relationship to the norm of academic freedom proclaimed by the "Academic Republic" and the laws of the existing broader social republic, the United States of America, in which the academic one is embedded. The ideal of academic freedom is presented, in a functionalist way, as fulfilling the core mission of the broader social republic. Yet contradictorily, in order to attain that social goal, university professors claim a special right of being free from outside intervention. What happens when there is a discrepancy between the academic freedom faculty demand, and the academic freedom the government is willing to concede? How is this conflict regulated? The initial AAUP formulations did not propose any process for redress. Historically speaking though, in order to be enforced when violated by the government, like in World War I or during the

McCarthy witch-hunt, the American Academy had to appeal to the very courts of the State they intended to assert their independence from, thus revealing the limitation, or rather the inexistence of a real constituent power of their own. The fiction set by the AAUP declaration has thus been confronted by a cruel historical question it has not yet resolved: Is the *Declaration of Principles* to be implemented through the exercise of the broader American Constitution, and thus function like a particular instantiation of it, or through the sovereign power of organized faculty, that is through the development of a new power of the faculty from below?

Second, one of the key differences in the Academic Republic/American Republic analogy is that in both the American and French Revolutions the social subject embodying the constituent power of the declaration and setting the constitution to exercise that very power is the same one: the representatives of the French and American people. However, in the 1915 fictional academic declaration, faculty delegate this power, or rather abdicate it to university administrators:

> American institutions of learning are usually controlled by boards of trustees as the ultimate repositories of power. Upon them finally devolves the measure of academic freedom which is to be realized in several institutions.[30]

University administrators are not the representatives of faculty; they are not elected, they do not come from the faculty ranks, and cannot be removed by them. Here the AAUP statement not only implicitly re-inscribes a separation between faculty and the sovereigns of the university, i.e., trustees, but through it faculty explicitly abdicate power altogether in regulating their own rights—a situation the *Bill of Rights* was intended precisely to prevent.

Behind Faculty's Abdication of Power

Since its inception, the AAUP has relied on the institutional mechanisms of "shared governance" to assert its rights which ultimately reinforced the concentration of all the institutional *executive* power in the hands of

[30] AAUP, p. 292.

the university president and the trustees. In 1917, AAUP President Frank Thilly declared:

> All our committee can do for the present, in instances of this kind [when academic freedom is violated], is to establish the facts and then to publish them with its own conclusions, trusting in the beneficent influence of justice, which sooner or later will do its perfect work.[31]

As Sheila Slaughter has argued the 1915 declaration was an "*appeal to university managers and the public to endorse the principle of academic freedom*," but "*the Association did not have the strength to demand that universities make formal provision for tenure*."[32] Behind the plea of the AAUP was the shared belief university administrations would also "soon or later" take part in the "perfect work" of "justice."

My point here is not to dispute whether the AAUP had the strength to enforce anything more than a unilateral declaration or aspiration to academic freedom. The question is, did the AAUP need to append to its legitimate declaration the immediate abdication of the power of the faculty to actually regulate all spheres of university life? At the core of this initial declaration and the emergence of the academic ideal—the academic as "professional" and not as an employee—lies a strange trade off. Clyde Barrow suggests academics were to gain through their professional status a sense of privilege—being professionals in charge of their labor process—in exchange for an abdication of power:

> the basic axiom of the ideology was its theoretical rejection of the employee in favor of efforts to reclaim intellectuals de facto position as a class with vested personal rights in the offices and property of the collegiate institution.[33]

[31] Thilly (1917, p. 9).

> How far we shall succeed in realizing our ideals will depend upon the loyal cooperation of the men and women who have joined our ranks; and it is to these that the new President appeals for support in behalf of our society. (Thilly 1917, p. 8)

[32] Slaughter, p. 51.

[33] Barrow, p. 168.

The idea of academics as a professional class superseding "employee" status has been proven to be a "noble lie," for faculty's partial control of the labor process was never meant to be a protection from labor exploitation, and unless unionized, academics are technically "employees at will." Yet the professional ideology has managed to secure the loyalty of a significant number of faculty.

Inherent in the early twentieth Century concept of academic freedom as an abstract regulating *principle* is a mystification of the power of knowledge itself: "true knowledge" or "the truth" will set you free. In fact, both the ideology of the effectiveness of truth itself and its corollary of a theology of history that follows a slow but steady narrative of progress, is inscribed in the mottos of most elite universities in the United States: Harvard's concise and lapidary "*Veritas*," John Hopkins's "*Veritas vos liberabit*" (the truth shall set you free), Yale's "*lux et veritas*" (light and truth), Berkeley's "*fiat lux*" (let there be light), Chicago's "*crescat scientia, vita excolatur*" (let knowledge grow from more to more, so human life be enriched), Stanford's "*die luft der freiheit weht*" (the wind of freedom blows), Princeton's *de sub numine viget* (under God's power she flourishes), Columbia's tautological "*lumine tuo videmos lumen*" (in thy light we shall see light) and Brown's almost perfect "*in deo speramus*" (in God we hope).

It is not by accident that all of these formulations, most of them borrowed from the Bible, share a metaphysical view of the power of knowledge: God is present, but rarely named, as the guarantor of knowledge inherent in truth and power. While the ideas discussed by academics in universities are mostly secular, the form of knowledge that believes in its instant effectiveness, modeled on the divine gospel, and which entertains the performative illusion that saying is doing, is a religious one. In all formulations and mottos, the real subjects that produce and participate in knowledge production (faculty and students) are absent. Knowledge, or Truth, is invoked as a process without a subject, an ineluctable process advancing toward the greater good under the auspices of God—or the *Administration*. In fact, this fiction transfers the power of setting and regulating the conditions of knowledge production and education to abstract higher "powers" or to an absent Actor, which amounts to recognizing and legitimizing those who actually hold this power: university administrators and the State.

These mottos were not created by faculty. They are the condensation of the university corporate ideal that requires and perpetuates a religious

form of knowledge, and faculty has repeatedly failed to contest them, and is often happy to coexist with them, and benefit from their metaphysical aura. Yet, in this religious view of knowledge, faculty's own intellectual power is diminished, since this knowledge is abstracted from social and material concerns, and above all from actual human beings that produce, change, use, and reflect on it. Knowledge is presented as self-produced and self-regularized—that is say, to a certain degree, mechanically automatized.

This disembodied and dematerialized conception of the power of knowledge is a major obstacle to achieve real, not metaphysical, academic freedom. It projects academic freedom as the pure search of a knowledge-for-the-sake, a knowledge which seems to operate as disembodied and dematerialized, abstracted of social context of production, but whose real aim is the reproduction of society as it is. For if knowledge produces itself, and faculty are only the technical facilitators of this process, then education's potentially transformative goals are foreclosed. And with it, all discussion of the actual material and social conditions of faculty and students in the exercise of their academic, working, and living conditions. Within this frame, there is no need to talk about salaries, housing, tenure, discrimination, censorship, student debt, food insecurity, or homelessness, since regardless knowledge will continue to be produced and transmitted.

Debating with Bruno Bauer and the Left Hegelians who were conducting their version of "critical criticism," Marx argued,

> ideas can never lead beyond an old world order but only beyond the ideas of the old world order. Ideas cannot carry out anything at all. In order to carry out ideas men are needed who can exert practical force.[34]

In fact, we need a materialist understanding of academic freedom grounded in a concept that foregrounds a secular view of knowledge as an historical, human and social production, embodied in a particular social subject, the faculty, and taking into account its particular social

[34] In Furet, p. 135. Marx, critique of Kantianism and Saint Max (Max Stirner): "Kant was satisfied with 'good will' alone, even if it remained entirely without result," and he transferred the realization of this good will, the harmony between it and the impulses of individuals, to the world beyond" (Furet, p. 149) A version of "good will" that is a form of "impotence" of wanna be bourgeois.

composition and positionality in terms of class, race, gender, nationality, etc.

Academic freedom needs to be understood first as the academic freedom of collective social subjects—faculty and students—directly engaged in the "process" of knowledge. Academic freedom cannot be the freedom of knowledge or truth itself. Instead of being conceived as a "regulating principle" that makes abstraction of social realities, academic freedom should be understood as the material freedom of the collective faculty exercising its power to assert economic and political independence from other social forces seeking to constrain it. Further, academic freedom should be focused on advocating a particular form of knowledge, a materialist one, inasmuch as it systematically reflects its own conditions of production, access, and objectives. It has been asserted academic freedom is not value neutral, yet beyond discriminating between different forms of interpretations of reality, it also must discriminate between different uses and forms of knowledge: between the knowledge mobilized in a transformative way to increase human freedom, and the one fabricated to restrict it. A materialist view of academic freedom cannot be neutral when confronted by the exploitative and oppressive uses of knowledge.

The 1960s Breakthrough: A Second Unfinished Revolution of Academic Freedom

The rocky unfolding of academic life in the US and repeated interference of government, business and other private interest groups in the intellectual life of universities has made the language of academic freedom rights more relevant as the twentieth century unfolded. The 1940 *Statement* incorporated almost unconsciously a definition of academic freedom as a *right*, without again specifying how this right was supposed to be ensured. At that time, the AAUP had still not embraced the need to support labor unions and contract law as one of the major vehicles to defend academic freedom, nor had academic freedom been reformulated in terms of constitutional law.[35] While shared governance has been effective to rehabilitate the intellectual reputation of faculty and scholars under

[35] In 1973, the AAUP issued a Statement on Collective Bargaining that provided, "The longstanding programs of the Association are means to achieve a number of basic ends at colleges and universities: the enhancement of academic freedom and tenure; of due

attack, this mechanism, and later the AAUP list of censured administrations, has not managed to *legally* enforce academic freedom as a right for all faculty targeted by the State or its administrators, because investigative findings by AAUP are not legally binding. In the aftermath of the McCarthy era, targeted faculty who were left defenseless by their own professional organizations, attempted to invoke the *principle* of academic freedom, and found a principle that was a hollow substitute for a right. As a result, they mobilized available legal resources and used what appeared to be the only available framework: to establish academic freedom as an individual right of faculty, akin to free speech rights, which were already protected by the US Constitution.

The transition of academic freedom from a regulating principle to a collective right that demanded mechanisms of enforcement and remediation was more of a conceptual break than a foreseeable "evolution" of the initial AAUP declaration. This break laid bare two paradoxes for faculty: the disproportion between the ambitious academic freedom goals and their meager material actualization, and the difficulty of articulating the fight for both as a common organizing project.

First, the history of academic freedom in the US was wrapped in a paradox: the more academic freedom gained an "ideal" social and material reality, the more it lost its founding philosophical grounds that established it as a *principle* of faculty autonomy and self-regulation based on the particular scientific expertise of the university community. To exist as an enforceable right, faculty had to rely on extramural authorities, such as the courts. Without clear enforcement, academic freedom rapidly ceased to exist for most faculty.

Second, the historical breakthrough of 1960s, when academic freedom had found an imperfect mechanism of enforcement, coincided with the development of social movements from below (first the Free Speech Movement, and then the Civil Rights movement) as well as with a new wave of unionization, including among faculty. In 1973, the AAUP issued an important statement on collective bargaining asserting,

process; of sound academic government. Collective bargaining, properly used, is essentially another means to achieve these ends."

> the Association promotes collective bargaining to reinforce and secure the principles of academic freedom and tenure, fair workplace procedures, and the economic security of the profession.[36]

Despite its general embrace of unionism in the mid-1970s, the AAUP, while acknowledging the benefits of collective bargaining to secure salary, pensions, workload, anti-discrimination and even tenure rights and benefits, initially omitted one particular "right" it felt still should remain outside the general union strategy: academic freedom. The AAUP continued to rely on non-contractual mechanisms to enforce academic freedom: independent investigations by academic senate committees, or the AAUP itself.

Further, an implicit division of labor was established between the two types of faculty organizations (labor unions and professional organizations) which now were not at odds. Unions would secure and protect "bread and butter issues," including the material conditions of teaching and research, while professional organizations and shared governance would regulate and ensure the autonomy of the labor process itself. This dual form of faculty organization is harmful when it is allowed to imply differential treatment of rights, such as economic rights must be secured and legally enforceable, while political rights are less essential and can operate at the symbolic level of "principles."

Toward A Contract and New Framework for Academic Freedom

The only concrete possibility to overcome the issues raised above is to resort to a formal contract, to articulate and organize the collective rights and struggle of faculty toward a re-envisioned model of academic freedom. Faculty need a contract that secures academic freedom. As legal scholar Philip Lee concluded after reviewing the limitations of shared governance and constitutional law, "*a new legal foundation for professorial academic freedom is sorely needed.*"[37] He then proposed, *"an alternative*

[36] https://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/statementcolbargaining.htm.

[37] In order to expand the academic freedom protections for all university professors regardless of the state involvement at their institutions, the proper theoretical focus should be on how we can ensure that universities act in a way that maximizes the social benefits of higher education" (LEE, p. 115).

foundation of academic freedom grounded in contract law. Contract law allows the recognition of AAUP's principles as interpretive guideposts in adjudicating disputes between professors and their universities."[38]

One of the major limitations of framing academic freedom rights within the First Amendment, is it only applies to public universities. Yet, as Lee points out,

> unlike First Amendment analysis, contract law makes no distinction between state and private actors. The agreement controls the rights and duties of the parties, both public and private. Also, unlike First Amendment analysis, contract law allows for the recognition of professors as something more than just public employees.[39]

However, reframing academic freedom in terms of contract law is not an individual effort, or one pursued in the courts. This reframing can only be secured through collective bargaining that is by developing, extending, and strengthening faculty unions.

The largest push to make academic freedom an issue in collective bargaining emerged post 9/11, and was led by AAUP. In 2009, under the leadership of Gary Rhoades, the AAUP launched a "Speak Up, Speak Out" campaign to respond to ongoing assaults on academic freedom. Rhoades proposed to develop the organizing power of faculty by establishing,

> "*mechanisms for mobilizing rapid responses in defense of our colleagues*" as well as building "*an academic network for responsible leadership, which could serve as a resource for faculty seeking information about candidates for administrative positions*" to increase the control and pressure from faculty over university managers.[40]

Rhoades, an advocate of investing labor unions with the mission of preserving and expanding academic freedom argues:

> Collective bargaining is a mechanism by which two-thirds of our members have negotiated provisions to give legal force to the principles of academic

[38] LEE, p. 116.

[39] Ibid.

[40] *Academe*, January–February 2009.

> freedom and tenure, due process, and shared governance that are at the AAUP's core.[41]

Again, well aware of the conservative nature of some faculty in elite institutions Rhoades continued:

> Some members have expressed discomfort with our strong stance on public-sector collective bargaining. But if we are to participate in the public domain, we need to take stands, publicly and aggressively. That is who we are. That is what we do. An attack on our colleagues' rights is an attack on us all. We are in clarifying times. Much is at stake. For there are groups seeking to eradicate what they see as our anachronistic professorial prerogatives.[42]

Inserting academic freedom in the contractual framework has a double advantage: (1) It allows us to articulate the demand for effective legal protections for faculty and the material means and conditions for academic freedom; and (2) It transforms academic freedom into a site of struggle, a place to test and increase faculty power and to redefine what kind of freedom academics need.

Two major critiques have emerged against considering academic freedom from contract law/collective bargaining perspective. The first has to do with the limiting nature of a contractual framework, since a contract implies recognizing and confronting another power, university administration. Many non-unionized faculty prefer to remain in the mode of the self-declaration of power embodied in academic senates, for even if largely symbolic and fictional, it is an absolute claim to self-governance, and a powerful ideal. The second critique comes from labor organizers and faculty activists who are weary the language of academic freedom, as codified by the AAUP, with regard to "rights and responsibilities," actually could be used to discipline "irresponsible" uses of academic freedom.

I will address these two critiques by making the case for use of a contractual framework within collective bargaining as a way both to enforce and secure academic freedom, and also redefine academic freedom as a first step to a renewed claim for faculty power and sovereignty. In addition, embracing the fight for academic freedom as a political right of

[41] Rhoades (2011).

[42] Ibid.

faculty is an opportunity to develop a form of unionism that goes beyond the transactional approach traditionally enforced by business, and toward a unionism "for the common good." The question is not whether unions should embrace the defense of academic freedom, but rather how to overcome the limitations previously encountered by professional associations deprived of bargaining rights.

Indeed, we do not need *any* kind of contract for academic freedom, we need a contract that expands the power of faculty while limiting the power of management. Academic freedom needs to become, like the university, a "common good"; but also a common good those outside the university defend and expand. Academic Freedom needs to be incorporated in labor contracts.

A major consideration in contractually recognizing academic freedom is we cannot simply cut and paste the AAUP language from the 1915 *Declaration* or even the 1940 *Statement*. As AAUP legal counsel Michael Mauer recently argued, the AAUP guidelines

> are more appropriately included in institution-wide policies, rather than in a document that establishes rules that may lead to disciplinary action.[43]

Indeed all contract academic freedom articles that contain references to faculty's "*responsibility*" in their use of academic freedom can and will be used not only to "*curtail academic faculty expression*."[44]

A labor contract is a different kind of social contract than a shared governance policy. While the latter is a document of self-regulation established by faculty and expected to be honored by university administrators, a labor contract is legally binding on both parties.

Unions should refuse to insert in their contract any language that could be used to discipline academic workers. Academic freedom articles which are necessary should follow a new class framework: they should establish in detail the academic freedom rights of faculty and they also should specify responsibilities of management—but of management *alone*. Of the 36 faculty contracts I reviewed, 22 directly borrowed from the AAUP rights and responsibilities, and only 10 created new language and a result an expanded framework. The most useful and notable innovations have

[43] Mauer (2015, p. 4).

[44] Ibid.

to do precisely with the assertion of the role of academic freedom as a common good for a democratic society, and also with the clear delineation of the responsibilities of management to actually protect faculty who come under attack.

For example, a University of Fermont faculty contract asserts

> institutions of higher education operate for the common good to ensure the preservation and advancement of knowledge through its creation and dissemination and not to further the interest of either the individual faculty member or the institution as a whole. The common good thus depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition.

Some contracts go even further and explicitly articulate academic freedom as a key ingredient to democratic societies:

> Academic freedom is essential for the maintenance of vital democratic institutions and of an informed and energized citizenry.

Another innovation has been developing contract language that systematically avoids language to discipline faculty, but clearly and specifically outlines management's obligations. The labor contract between faculty and Florida State University asserts "*the Board shall protect any member of the faculty against influences, from within or without the University, which would restrict the faculty member in the exercise of these freedoms.*"[45]

The San Francisco Community College faculty contract may be the strongest in this regard, declaring

> *interference with or censure of an academic employee by District officials or by outside individuals or groups because of the faculty member's introduction of relevant and controversial subjects or provision of relevant and appropriate educational professional services to students is precluded by the principle of academic freedom,*" and "*the parties acknowledge the fundamental need to protect faculty from censorship or restraint which might interfere with their obligation to pursue truth in the performance of their teaching or other educational functions.*

[45] Similarly, the faculty contract of University of Florida reads: "The University recognizes that internal and external forces may seek at times to restrict academic freedom, and the University shall maintain, encourage, protect and promote academic freedom."

These explicit protections are particularly important since the most recent and recurring attacks on academic freedom have come from outside the university and have initiated public harassment campaigns aimed at particular faculty, with calls to administration to sanction or terminate faculty. It is important to have contract language that articulates university assurances to protect faculty they employ against organized attacks against what they teach or what they say in the public sphere.

The second general consideration regarding academic freedom contracts is the need for clear procedures to protect faculty from harassment and censorship. Very few academic freedom articles have clear grievance procedures specified. However, the faculty contract with the University of New Hampshire provides specificity with regard to the grievance process:

> The parties agree that grievances involving alleged violations of this Article that are pursued to arbitration will only be heard by arbitrators who are from an academic community of higher education.

Still, The University of Hawaii may be where faculty has secured the clearest grievance path. "Procedure for dealing with alleged infringements" allows for either the traditional grievance and arbitration process or a specific procedure for academic freedom violations that provides stronger guarantees and ensures the issue will be evaluated by faculty.

Finally, it is important to have articles of academic freedom that overcome the implicit limitations to free speech rights set by the AAUP declarations. As Reichman notes, both the AAUP 1915 *Declaration* and the 1940 *Statement* are "*markedly ambivalent about the nature and the extent of the freedom [of faculty members as citizens without institutional restraint*]."[46] The Declaration asserts when speaking as citizens (in their "extramural utterances") "*academic teachers are under a peculiar obligation to avoid hasty or unverified or exaggerated statements and to refrain from intemperate or sensational modes of expression*." This obvious restriction of free speech rights for academics was somewhat toned down in the 1940 Statement in the following manner:

> When they speak or write as citizens, they [college and university teachers] should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special

[46] Reichmann (2019, p. 52).

> position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers they should remember that the public might judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.

In the 1970s the AAUP did strike this provision, arguing faculty free speech should be a matter of concern only in the very narrow and specific cases when it "bears on professional competence"—for example an engineer that would publicly question the fundamental laws of mathematics.[47] Nonetheless it is the 1940 formulation that is repeatedly quoted today in most academic freedom contract articles. The implicit understanding is academic freedom is not a right, like free speech, but rather a privilege bestowed on a certain professional status, and as such comes with some tradeoffs: You can't be a completely free citizen *and* a scholar, you must choose, and if you choose to belong to this higher-privilege body, you must relinquish your right as a citizen to make unrestrained utterances. In this politically repressive view of academic freedom the faculty member is a lesser citizen, and their intimate connection with knowledge is implicitly perceived as a potentially dangerous one.

This is why it is especially important to introduce in labor contracts specific clauses that undo and contest any such veiled attempts at censorship, which today in many cases remains an operating norm. Some contracts, including the State University of New York (SUNY), have proposed a very simple revision of the AAUP language, erasing some restrictions while acknowledging a difference between utterances:

> In their role as citizens, employees have the same freedoms as other citizens. However, in their extramural utterances employees have an obligation to indicate that they are not institutional spokespersons.

In such a semi-schizophrenic setting, faculty must be able to clearly separate at all times their two political subjectivities: that of faculty member and citizen, and state in each case *who* is speaking. Further, this kind of formulation puts the burden of proof on the faculty member. Other formulations, like the one by Brandeis University, presupposes

[47] Reichman, p. 53.

unless stated, faculty members speak for themselves, not for their institutions:

> when a Faculty Member speaks or writes in public, other than as a representative of the university, they are free from institutional restraints.

In this improved formulation, the opposition is not between the scholar and the citizen but between two forms of being a citizen-scholar: as speaking individually, for oneself, and speaking on behalf of the institution.

Faculty contracts in Hawaii and Florida simplify matters further by equalizing status of both citizen and faculty, and granting to both the unrestrained freedom of expression already granted in the US Constitution:

> (b) As to matters outside the area of the faculty member's scholarly interest, the faculty member has the right to enjoy the same freedoms as other individuals, including political rights and privileges, without fear of institutional censorship or discipline. (c) The ideas of different members of the University community will often and quite naturally conflict. It is not the role of the University to shield individuals from expressions of ideas and opinions that may differ from their own.

Beyond Contractualism: A Class Perspective

Bringing academic freedom rights effectively into contract law requires developing a class perspective. It requires a fight for a different kind of university. If academic freedom continues to be reduced to the partial control of the labor process by faculty, it will continue to remain at risk even if guaranteed in labor contracts. Faculty must expand their aspirations for full democratic control of the university and for material guarantees in the free exercise of their job.

As many scholars have reminded us, academic freedom requires a material base to be effective. This means to restore academic freedom rights to all faculty, we need a united campaign of all higher education unions and professional organizations to reverse the two-tier system of employment and return to tenure track appointments as the normal and standard appointment in all higher education institutions (from community colleges to research universities). Our labor contracts need to have the

aspirational goal of limiting the number and kinds of university contingent appointments, which only should be used to temporarily replace faculty on sabbatical, medical or family leave, instead of eliminating tenure track positions. Some unions have begun to negotiate provisions to enable paths to tenure for existing lecturers or contingent faculty. Others have begun to set caps on the percentage of non-tenured faculty allowed per hiring unit. These are important steps toward a reversal of the existing unequal and damaging labor regime. But the material conditions of academic freedom also require fully funded academic programs, with operative budgets, especially in disciplines where knowledge production is most contentious, and thus vulnerable, such as departments of ethnic and gender studies.

For faculty to control their own labor process, as well as the conditions of education and research, they need to gain political control of university administration. And they must do so in a democratic manner and involving the rest of university employees, as well as students. This requires going beyond the narrow "shared governance" outlined in the 1920 AAUP Report on tenure and governance. That universities should be governed by a periodically-elected council comprised exclusively of faculty, staff, and students is not a ridiculous idea, and has been practiced for decades and even centuries in public universities in Europe and Latin America. That is, if the institution's governance structure and independent faculty organizations pre-existed the development of the centralized corporate capitalism that transformed and expanded the university system in the US in the late nineteenth Century. Having real democratic faculty governance in higher education institutions is an idea that was argued and unfortunately quickly defeated by several American scholars and activists, such as James McKeen Cattell in *University Control* (1913) and James Kirkpatrick in *The American College and its* Rulers (1926).

Kirkpatrick actually argues such bottom up structures of democratic governance did exist at a few institutions such as Harvard, Williams, and Mary, Oberlin College and the University of Virginia. For Kirkpatrick, academic democracy required a school design

> in which first the patrons and supporters, second, the teachers and officers of administration, and finally, the pupils or students are so related to each

> other that they share mutually in the conduct of all the major as well as the minor interests and activities of the school.[48]

He further notes Harvard in its early years was an institution truly self-governed by faculty, where

> "*there was no provision in the original charter for the president as an officer superior to his colleagues, having the right to direct and supervise their work*."[49] In fact, "*the faculties of Harvard, and of the College of William and Mary, were made the custodians of the properties and the responsible directors and administrators of their institutions.*[50]

Most Ivy League schools had different degrees of democratic self-governance practices in the early twentieth century, before their systems of governance became codified in the era of corporate capitalism. There were even more radical forms of democracy, such as Oberlin College, where

> "at a very early date in its history, 1835, the Oberlin College board gave the faculty the right of control over "all matters of internal administration."[51]

At the University of Virginia, founded by Thomas Jefferson in 1819, Jefferson "*provided in his university constitution for the corporate responsibility of his faculty under the chairmanship of a professor chosen annually by his colleagues*."[52] In fact, "*the University of Virginia continued for eighty years without a president*," and Kirkpatrick concluded even without a president "*the faculty itself was responsible*."[53]

Finally, it is important to articulate the rights we demand in the university as education workers. Bertell Ollman has argued:

[48] Kirkpatrick (1926, p. 1).

[49] Ibid., p. 7.

[50] Ibid., p. 17.

[51] Ibid., p. 54.

[52] Ibid., p. 55.

[53] Ibid., pp. 55–56.

> we are freed to work for academic freedom by helping to build the egalitarian conditions that are necessary for it to exist. This includes a demand for academic freedom not just for teachers and students but for workers and others who today are penalized for freely expressing their opinions. In developing this expanded understanding of the ideal of academic freedom, in sharing it in the university and with the public at large, we are beginning the work of putting it into practice. Academic freedom, by this interpretation, lives and grows in the conscious struggle for a socialist society.

Only from this perspective can faculty efforts to preserve and expand academic freedom fully resonate with labor allies, for it is a fight of all sectors of the class for full democratic rights and political self-determination, and democratic control of the society they help produce with their labor and collective intelligence.

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CHAPTER 8

Changing Pathways of Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Any Place for Afrocentric Ideas?

Felix Kumah-Abiwu

Introduction

The changing pathways of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have not only renewed the interest of scholars on the future prospects of these historic institutions, but other observers are raising key questions on funding challenges, student enrollment, and the need for visionary leadership (Gasman 2013; Harper and Gasman 2008; Hardy et al. 2019). Pennamon (2019) captures the centrality of the debates, especially on leadership by asserting that the institutional leadership of many HBCUs (i.e., presidents and chancellors) will not only be changing in the next few years, but the pathways of these institutions are also being paved for up-and-coming new leaders to redefine the future of these institutions. While some scholarly works (Gasman 2013; Allen et al.

F. Kumah-Abiwu (✉)
Department of Pan-African Studies, Kent State University, Kent, OH, USA
e-mail: fkumahab@kent.edu

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2007; Kim and Conrad 2006; Albritton 2012) have articulated the day to day challenges (e.g., funding and student enrollment) or what could be described as the "bread-and-butter" issues of HBCUs, other studies (Henry and Closson 2010; Gasman 2013; Harley 2001; Allen et al. 2007; Colon 2000) have raised concerns about the dominance of Eurocentric ideas and ethos in the institutional style, administration, and curricula matters at HBCUs. For some, these historic institutions seem to be losing their Black or African-centered identity (Henry and Closson 2010; Colon 2000). Clearly, the distinctiveness of HBCUs in their historic mission of educating Blacks cannot be overlooked, but the debate on their "loss of identity" raises additional question whether these institutions have fully embraced Black or African-centered ideas/ethos as part of their nature or "DNA" in the first place.

To enhance our understanding of these issues, this chapter examines the changing pathways of HBCUs and the question of whether Afrocentric ideas are intentionally integrated into the institutional character and curricula of these institutions. The research question to be explored is: Is there any place for Afrocentric or African-centered ideas in the changing pathways of HBCUs? To answer this question, the chapter incorporates the core ideas of Afrocentric theory with relevant works from the literature. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part provides an overview of HBCUs and their evolution. The second part examines Afrocentric theory, its core ideas, and significance to HBCUs. The third and final part employs the core tenets of the theory to examine the changing pathways of HBCUs. The chapter concludes by underscoring the argument that HBCUs will be better served if Afrocentric ideas are intentionally integrated into their changing pathways.

Evolution of HBCUs

The scholarly field of Black or Africana Studies has continued to advance since the field evolved in the 1960s (Karenga 2010; Colon 2003) as an academic discipline that aims to not only address the distorted history and culture of people of African descent, but to uplift the dignity of Black people (Karenga 2010; Kumah-Abiwu 2016). To this end, several research works have been produced and are still being produced on critical issues of identity, race/class matters, social mobility, educational experiences, and progress of Black people through access to public education (Kumah-Abiwu 2019a; Brooms 2017; Kumah-Abiwu 2019b; Moore and

Lewis 2014). The importance of education brings HBCUs into focus for our discussion. Two questions to be explored are: What are HBCUs? How do they evolve?

By definition, HBCUs are institutions of higher education in the United States with the principal mission of providing higher education to African Americans (Redd 1998; Allen et al. 2007; Avery 2009). Gasman (2013) captures the description quite well by stating HBCUs are "the only institutions in the United States that were created for the express purpose of educating Black citizens. These institutions were established during the decades after the Civil War and up until 1964" (p. 5). As of 2018, there were 101 HBCUs in 19 states, the District of Columbia (DC), and the US Virgin Islands. Out of the total, 51 are public while 50 are private/nonprofit institutions (NCES 2020). While the mission of HBCUs in educating Black citizens is very clear, it is essential to also note these institutions have enrolled students from other races/ethnicity for several decades (Redd 1998; Gasman 2013). In 2018, for example, non-Black students accounted for 24% of the total enrollment at HBCUs (NCES 2020).

With respect to their evolution, Allen et al. (2007) have suggested a combination of factors such as the Emancipation Proclamation, victory of Northern states over the South during the Civil War, and the passage of the 13th Amendment to the US Constitution. All were harbingers of the evolution of HBCUs. While recognizing the significance of these factors, it is important, as this chapter argues, to add that the struggles for freedom and dignity by enslaved Africans cannot be overlooked in the narrative on their emancipation and educational progress. As is very well-known, slave owners not only took away the human dignity from Africans who were held in slavery, but they also prohibited them from learning to read and write. Despite this, the strong desire for learning never disappeared from these enslaved Africans (Allen et al. 2007; Colon 2000).

Fryer and Greenstone (2010) have also discussed the evolution of HBCUs with a focus on three schools that served Blacks in the pre-Civil War era. The Institute for Colored Youth, which was renamed Cheyney State University was established in Pennsylvania in 1837. It was followed by the establishment of Ashmun Institute, also known as Lincoln University of Pennsylvania in 1854. The third school is Wilberforce University in Ohio, which was established in 1856 (Redd 1998; Colon 2000). Many

philanthropists and religious organizations were involved in the establishment of these institutions, which were the only options for "free" Blacks to receive higher education in the pre-Civil War era (Gasman and Tudico 2008; Albritton 2012). We could describe this period as phase one of the evolutionary process of HBCUs. Phase two covers the post-Civil War era. This era saw the proliferation of private HBCUs across the South between 1865 and 1890 (Fryer and Greenstone 2010; Albritton 2012). The establishment of these institutions during this phase was made possible with support from the Freedman's Bureau, which provided freed slaves with opportunities, including education in the post-Civil War era (Palmer and Gasman 2008; Hardy et al. 2019). Missionaries and philanthropists from the Northern states also provided support for the establishment of these institutions (Palmer and Gasman 2008).

The Morrill Act of 1890 could be categorized as the third phase of the evolutionary process of HBCUs. The Act provided public funding (land-grant) that facilitated the expansion of public colleges for lower/middle-income Americans, including Blacks across the country (Avery 2009; Redd 1998). This third phase is the era when public HBCUs emerged (Avery 2009). Now renowned HBCUs were established across the United States, especially in the South, and included: Clark Atlanta University in Georgia, St. Augustine's College in North Carolina, Fisk University in Tennessee, Johnson Smith University in North Carolina (Redd 1998), and Howard University in Washington, DC. Other notable HBCUs are Morehouse College (Georgia), Florida A&M University (Florida), Kentucky State University (Kentucky), Xavier University (Louisiana), and Alabama State (Alabama) among others (Brown 2013; Redd 1998).

Another important element in this evolutionary process of HBCUs is what Albritton (2012) describes as the initial funding question. For Albritton (2012), the funding question is not only important from the perspective of the origin debate of HBCUs, but the discourse also is significant in any efforts to better understand the current state of these institutions.

Initial Funding and Support for HBCUs

As previously noted, the initial funding and support for HBCUs was mainly from various religious denominations, such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African American Episcopal Zion Church, and the American Baptist Home Mission Society, among others

(Albritton 2012; Redd 1998). White missionary organizations also provided financial support in the initial stages of HBCUs, but Albritton (2012) has suggested the actual purpose of these organizations was to help educate Blacks to become the so-called "class of morally upright citizens who knew how to live among White society" (p. 314). In discussing these institutions, Cantey et al. (2011) recounted the example of Hampton Institute which was founded in 1868 as a normal school for Blacks with most of its funding from the American Missionary Association. Booker T. Washington's training at Hampton made him one of the famous students of Hampton and a champion of vocational education (Cantey et al. 2011; Colon 2000).

It should be noted Washington did not only become a "great apostle" of vocational training for Blacks, but he also transformed Tuskegee Institute to become one of the most recognizable educational centers for Blacks in the South (Cantey et al. 2011). Unlike Washington's emphasis on vocational education for Black emancipation, W. E. B. Du Bois, on the other hand, advocated for a strong liberal education for Blacks (Allen et al. 2007). Allen et al. (2007) noted funding from white missionaries and philanthropists not only allowed these early Black colleges and universities to keep their doors open, but it also gave sponsors "a great deal of control over the curriculum and educational goals associated with attending an HBCU" (p. 267). This quote provides some support for the argument regarding the Eurocentric influence of these institutions from their inception. Moreover, the funding/control debate with reference to curricula and educational goals brings into focus the "reliance on Eurocentric" ideals. In other words, the question of whether Afrocentric ideas have any place in the changing pathways of HBCUs needs to be further explored.

Afrocentric Theory

Although African-centered ideas, norms, and values date back to the beginning of African people or people of African descent, early social thinkers and freedom fighters/warriors such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Yaa Asantewa, Malcolm X., Cheikh Anta Diop, Harriet Tubman, and Kwame Nkrumah, among others, had fought and defended the dignity of people of African descent in their unique ways. Following the pathways of these early thinkers and freedom fighters is Chief Molefi Asante who drew inspirations and ideas from the "African wisdom pot"

to advance his Afrocentric theory or Afrocentricity (Asante 1987, 1988, 1998, 2003).

In his early work entitled *The Afrocentric Idea*, Asante (1987) posits the term *Afrology*, coined in *Afrocentricity* denotes "the study of African concepts, issues, and behaviors" (p. 16) that involve African themes, ideas, norms, and ethos about Africans in the diaspora and those on the continent. Asante (2003) adds that the concept of Afrocentricity also involves what he describes as a mode of thought and action where the centrality of African-centered interests, values, and perspectives predominate. In other words, as Asante (2003) argues, people of African descent should be placed at the center of analysis involving them. In this case, Afrocentricity constitutes a frame of reference or a theoretical lens through which we can better understand people of African descent and their experiences (Asante 1998; Mazama 2001; Kumah-Abiwu 2016).

Like the construction of all theories, the Afrocentric theory has been advanced through Asante's prolific works on the theory and his success in mentoring other "disciples" of the theory over three decades. Ama Mazama is perhaps one of the more ardent and "chief apostles" of the theory. In her article entitled "The Afrocentric Paradigm: Contours and Definitions," Mazama (2001) argues that the Afrocentric idea "rests on the assertion of the primacy of the African experience for African people…its aim is to give us our African victorious consciousness back" (p. 388). Mazama (2001) adds that the operationalization of the Afrocentric idea "also means viewing the European voice as just one among many and not necessarily the wisest one" (p. 388). Mazama's (2001) reasoning on the need to see the European voice as one among many is deeply rooted in the central pillars of the Afrocentric theory and the struggles of African people for freedom and dignity from the tentacles of Eurocentric ideas.

On the dominance of Eurocentric ideas, Asante (1987) contends that his work on Afrocentricity "constituted a radical critique of the Eurocentric ideology that masquerades as a universal view" in major fields of scholarship (p. 3). Similar to Mazama's logic on the European voice, Asante (1987) argues that the inability to observe from different viewpoints is perhaps the one common problem in European dominated scholarship. Asante (1987) summarizes his thought on the above discussion this way:

> I am not questioning the validity of the Eurocentric tradition within its context;
>
> I am simply stating that such a view must not seek an ungrounded aggrandizement by claiming a universal hegemony, as it has frequently done in the social sciences. (p. 4)

This discussion on Afrocentricity reveals two essential points that Kumah-Abiwu (2016) captures well: First, the Afrocentric theory underscores the distinctive ideas of people of African descent that shape their worldview and interpretation of the world around them (Kumah-Abiwu 2016). Second, the recognition of the African agency or the centrality of people of African descent at the center of any analysis regarding them (Asante 1998). In the nutshell, as Asante (1998, 2003) and other scholars (Dei 1994; Hoskins 1992; Mazama 2001) have argued, people of African descent need to be studied as active players in their own affairs and with their own agency.

As is the case in the intellectual development of any theory, Afrocentricity has its critiques as well. Within the discipline of Africana Studies, Adeleke (2009) and Oyebade (1990) are perhaps the fiercest critiques of the theory. In his book, *The Case Against Afrocentrism*, scholar Adeleke argues that the central assumption of the theory seems to overemphasize the idea of an "Afrocentric essentialism" which uses "Africa to advance a monolithic and homogenous history, culture, and identity for all Black people, regardless of geographical location" (p. 11). According to Adeleke (2009), "Afrocentrists were able to impose a unified identity on all Black people, ignoring the multiple complex historical and cultural experiences…and mythologizing identity" (p. 91). Other critics of the theory have raised questions about Asante's works on whether ancient Egypt or Kemet had any influence on Greek civilization. Works by Schlesinger (1991) and D'Souza (1995) are a few examples (also see Alkebulan 2007; Kumah-Abiwu 2016).

Notwithstanding these criticisms, there is a central case that needs to be underscored at this point of the discussion. It is a fact that the history, culture, and contributions of people of African descent has been distorted, ignored, and misrepresented for centuries (Karenga 2010; Asante 1987; Alkebulan 2007), with the "European voice" claiming the position as the "universal norm" and being seen as the "wisest voice" (Mazama 2001). However, the emergence of Afrocentricity (theory/praxis) gives voice back to people of African descent to rediscover and retell their lost story

through their worldview (Asante 1987; Karenga 2010; Kumah-Abiwu 2016). Asante (2016) echoed a similar thought elsewhere by posing this important question in relation to the previous discussion. Asante (2016) notes: Why not support Africans or people of African descent to be at the center of their own narrative? To Asante (2016), the attempt to honestly answer this question will crumble the entire structure of the anti-Afrocentric arguments because denying people of African descent what others demand will not amount to any sound argument. The importance of giving a voice and bringing people of African descent back into the center of their own affairs might explain the spread of Afrocentric schools, museums, barbershops, architects, psychologists, social workers, and hairstyles across the United States in recent years.

Given the value and utility of the Afrocentric concept, it will be useful to reiterate the research question of whether Afrocentric ideas are being systematically integrated into the changing pathways of HBCUs. In other words, is there any place for Afrocentric or African-centered ideas in the changing pathways of HBCUs? The next section draws on the core elements of the theory and provides supporting examples for analysis.

Changing Pathways of HBCUs

Gasman's (2013) work, *The Changing Face of Historically Black Colleges and Universities*, captures an important quote by Brian Bridges, Executive Director of the United Negro College Fund's (UNCF)/Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute: "As the country moves closer to becoming a minority-majority population, several opportunities exist for HBCUs, from increased enrollments, funding, and overall attention. However, the appropriate strategic leaders and vision must be in place to take advantage of any opportunities that arise for these schools" (p. 5). This quote is a reminder of Pennamon's (2019) call for up-and-coming leaders to redefine the future of HBCUs in order to address the challenges or what I describe as "bread-and-butter" matters of these institutions. While these issues are critical to the survival of these institutions, the key element that deals with the "soul and identity" of these historic institutions seems to be overlooked in the broader discourse on HBCUs. This is where my central argument on whether there is any place for African-centered ideas or Afrocentricity in the changing pathways of HBCUs becomes important to discuss. I address this from two standpoints. First, I examine

the changing pathways of HBCUs within the context of funding challenges and student enrollment or the "bread-and-butter" issues. Second, I discuss the extent to which the ideas of the Afrocentric theory are being intentionally integrated into the changing pathways of these historic institutions.

With respect to the "bread-and-butter" issues of funding and other challenges, many HBCUs are facing the same challenges as other institutions of higher education in America; but it is also important to be reminded, as Colon (2003) has argued, HBCUs are not monolithic. In other words, these historic institutions differ in size, mission, sponsorship, curricula emphases, location, tradition, and governance and control issues. As previously noted, there also are HBCUs that are public while others are private with religious/nonsectarian affiliations (Gasman et al. 2007). Simply put, HBCUs may have similar characteristics, challenges, and a shared mission of educating Blacks, but they also differ in many aspects (Gasman et al. 2007; Colon 2003).

In the same vein, it could be argued many HBCUs are merely surviving, while others are facing issues of identity. Indeed, the "survival question" is certainly not new in the scholarly debates regarding HBCUs. In fact, Abelman and Dalessandro (2009) echoed the argument of Evans et al. (2002) that the idea of success was not intended for the establishment of HBCUs in the first place. According to Abelman and Dalessandro (2009), these institutions were "established to appease Black people or to serve as 'holding institutions' so Black students would not matriculate from historically white colleges and universities" (p. 106). The above assertion might be debatable, especially on the "intent argument," but the long history of problems that have characterized these institutions might support Abelman and Dalessandro's (2009) argument. For example, HBCUs have been praised for their many accomplishments (Bracey 2017), but these institutions also have continued to struggle with financial resources due to the marginal support they receive from government (federal and state) (Abelman and Dalessandro 2009).

On the financial status and challenges of HBCUs, Bracey (2017), as other scholars (Harper et al. 2009), have discussed these issues, but from a historical perspective. To these scholars, one can only understand the historically marginal federal funding for HBCUs by examining the debates and policy surrounding their establishment. Bracey (2017) takes the discourse further by arguing African Americans are always determined to defy oppressive forces in pursuit of their education, but the history of

their efforts to acquire higher education has always been met with "a series of obstacles" created by the oppressive system through policy and legislative actions (p. 672). An example of such a legislative action was the Morrill Act of 1890 which helped to establish land-grant educational institutions, including Black higher educational institutions. While the Act was generally helpful in the establishment of public HBCUs, Bracey (2017) argues white-controlled state legislatures, especially in the South, not only controlled the flow of money to HBCUs, but also restricted public funding needed to properly administer many institutions. Harper et al. (2009) raised similar viewpoints, arguing public HBCUs established under the Morrill Act of 1890 were not only poorly funded, but many operated with inadequately trained faculty when compared to white land-grant institutions.

Considering the record of funding deficits for many public HBCUs since the time of their inception (Bracey 2017; Harper et al. 2009), one would anticipate a sound policy-driven effort to change the funding calculus of these institutions over time, given their essential role in educating fellow Americans. Kujovich's (1993) study on the history of unequal funding for public Black colleges underscores the discussion on the funding challenges facing HBCUs. For Kujovich (1993), Black colleges have been characterized by unequal funding since their inception. Gasman (2010) argues while federal funding for public HBCUs began with the Freedmen's Bureau initiative, it was not until the Higher education Act of 1965 when "systemic funding" became available to these colleges.

In addition, extra funding and recognition of HBCUs occurred in 1980 when President Jimmy Carter signed Executive Order 12232 in an attempt to address the effects of "discriminatory treatment" experienced by HBCUs (Gasman 2010). The executive order was created to strengthen the capacity of HBCUs, but financial support has not "significantly narrow[ed] the gaps in funding disparities between HBCUs and Historically White Institutions" (Gasman 2010, p. 1). The obvious question one might ask is what does the funding deficits of HBCUs mean for their identity? Importantly and as is generally known, money, power, and control are not only interlinked, but also shape policy outcomes. As Bracey (2017) argued, white-controlled state legislatures restricted the finances needed to properly administer HBCUs. More importantly, how can HBCUs intentionally address issues of identity by integrating Afrocentric ideas into administrative style and curricula if they are constantly

worried about "bread-and-butter" such as survival? I argue HBCUs are not likely to fully embrace Afrocentric ideas in the United States when they are not financially independent and in control of their own sources of funding. Nkrumah (1970) argued in his writings for economic independence for people of African descent in order to eschew global Eurocentric power and control.

Another aspect of the shifting pathways of HBCUs is student enrollment and the changing nature of Black institutions vis-a-vis their mission of providing education to African Americans (Hardy et al. 2019). As Allen et al. (2007) noted, more than 90% of Black students in the United States were educated at HBCUs prior to 1954 (end of racial segregation); but with the end segregation Black student options increased, including attending Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs), which has resulted in declining enrollment at HBCUs (Albritton 2012). Notwithstanding, Allen et al. (2007) argue the number of Black students now choosing HBCUs is on the increase due to the culturally welcoming environments and the overall success (academic and socio-cultural) these institutions provide to students (Allen et al. 2007; Kim and Conrad 2006; Nichols and Evans-Bell 2017; Albritton 2012; Hardy et al. 2019).

At the same time, there are concerns about the changing nature of Black institutions and how this change might affect their future. For example, the rising enrollment of white students at HBCUs, as some have suggested (Allen et al. 2007), is shaping their outlook. The examples of West Virginia State University and Bluefield State College (also in West Virginia), where white students now constitute a majority are cases in point (Allen et al. 2007, p. 272). Henry and Closson (2010) describe the trend as the "whitening" HBCUs. These scholars offer two main reasons for the changing trend. First, the formative years of these institutions had white involvement in various capacities. Second, there also has been an increase in white involvement at public HBCUs following passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the mandate from federal and state governments to enroll greater numbers of white students (Henry and Closson 2010; Harley 2001).

Currently, as Gasman (2013) asserts in her report, "Changing Face of Historically Black Colleges and Universities," white students make up 13% of total student population at HBCUs. With the "whitening" of these institutions, Gasman (2013) observes that the "changing composition of HBCUs endangers the aspects of these institutions that make them unique" (p. 6). For Allen et al. (2007), the changing composition

of HBCUs can be compared to the formative years of Black colleges as centers of "white middle-class domination" (p. 272). Allen et al. (2007) caution that there is a likelihood of "HBCUs being transformed into environments where Blacks are treated as second-class citizens" (p. 272). For others, racial/cultural diversity is essential for these institutions and will make them stronger and foster what Gasman (2013) describes as a "mutual respect and an appreciation for Black culture among a broader population" (p. 6).

Regardless of the tone and tenor of ongoing debates on the "whitening" or changing demographics of HBCUs (Gasman 2013), this chapter maintains that diversity will serve HBCUs quite well in the near future. However, given the challenges these institutions face, we wonder whether Afrocentric ideas have place in the changing pathways of these institutions.

Any Place for Afrocentric Ideas?

Chief Molefi Asante's extensive work on the Afrocentric concept is grounded in the intellectual tradition of early Black thinkers and freedom fighters in Africa and the African diaspora who defended their "Africanness" and human dignity that were stripped away through the painful events of slavery and colonialism. It is important for people of African descent to be vigilant of the ever-present threats of encroachment on their history, culture, and ideas from Eurocentric tradition and practices (Asante 1987; Dei 1994; Mazama 2001; Alkebulan 2007). This may help us to better understand why the intellectual advancement of the Afrocentric theory in terms of its emphasis on the "African way" of doing things by Molefi Asante and his growing "scholarly devotees" need to be underscored.

To that end, the question of how or to what extent the Afrocentric theory is integrated into the curricula and administration of HBCUs is not only an ongoing topic of debate, but deserves further scholarly inquiry. For some, the debate centers on why HBCUs are not what I describe as the "laboratories of the Afrocentric idea"? I draw on the "laboratory metaphor" from the field of political science, which deals with the idea of how state governments serve as natural preparatory venues for political actors and policy ideas (Boeckelman 1992). In the same vein, one would expect HBCUs to serve as natural venues for the advancement of the Afrocentric idea. In other words, why aren't HBCUs leading the way in

the promotion and explication of the Afrocentric theory? Rogers (2008) argues in a decade-old article, "Black Colleges Still Lacking Ph.D. African American Studies Program", that unlike many PWIs, HBCUs have yet to build strong graduate degree programs in Black Studies due to what Rogers sees as lack of vision, resources, and whether these institutions need graduate degree programs, especially doctoral programs, in the first place.

Rogers (2008) noted that many observers of Black institutions share the view that HBCUs are by nature Black and embody the very "DNA" of Blackness in their curricula. For others, HBCUs are not leading the intellectual advancement of graduate education in African-centered ideas. Rogers (2008) further notes about 95% of curricula at HBCUs is Eurocentric-centered. In response to Rogers's article, Gasman (2008) argues that lack of efforts by the leadership of HBCUs to establish institution-wide courses on the Black experience across the curriculum has likely prevented the establishment of doctoral programs in Black Studies at HBCUs. Other reasons are funding challenges, unwillingness to take curricular risks, and a focus on undergraduate education (Gasman 2008).

Challenor (2002) also discussed the lack of Afrocentric graduate study at HBCUs, from the standpoint of African Studies programs. Except for Howard University, which was the first HBCU to establish a graduate degree in African Studies, no other HBCU has such a graduate program (Challenor 2002). Challenor (2002) argues that HBCUs have not been able to attract significant resources often provided by the US Department of Education, Ford, Rockefeller, and Carnegie Foundations for the establishment of these programs. Moreover, as Gasman (2008) suggested, most HBCUs are undergraduate serving institutions while most African Studies programs primarily exist at the graduate level (Challenor 2002). In addition, HBCUs appear to prioritize graduate education in professional areas such as business administration, social work, law, and medical sciences as a method to ensure their survival (Challenor 2002).

In contrast, one might have expected these institutions to lead the way in establishing Afrocentric graduate programs, especially doctoral programs, where future Afrocentric scholars could be trained to advance the field (Gasman 2008). Put differently, HBCUs appear to have abandoned any responsibility to teach, research, and advance Afrocentric ideas. As mentioned earlier, the fundamental assumption of Afrocentric ideas is not only grounded in the primacy of African-centered experience in reclaiming victorious consciousness (Mazama 2001), but also to center

Black interests, values, and perspectives. Thus, Afrocentric thought maintains people of African descent should be positioned at the center of any analysis that involves them (Asante 2003).

In effect, the "African voice" has been marginalized for centuries and needs to be amplified and treated with dignity and respect as one of the wisest voices and not necessarily "the wisest voice" as the "Eurocentric voice" has sought to portray itself to the rest of the world (Mazama 2001). Indeed, Mazama's (2001) reasoning on the dominance of the "Eurocentric voice" vis-à-vis the "redemptive power" of the Afrocentric concept connects well with the argument of this chapter and the themes of this book, relating to Whiteness, power, and the need for change in American higher Education.

As revealed throughout the discussions in this chapter, the value and importance of HBCUs in advancing the upward mobility of Blacks cannot be underestimated or overlooked. It's also not possible to disregard what we have described as the "bread-and-butter" issues of HBCUs, namely, survival. What is clear is HBCUs are not alone in addressing the "bread-and-butter" issues of survival. Other colleges and universities across America are facing challenges of enrollment and budget, especially in light of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and the partial closure of the global economy. It is also unclear what the future will look like for many Black communities, given the numerous challenges facing them—especially identity and safety. This is where HBCUs become important in not only producing leaders for our communities, but also studying and raising public awareness about the challenges facing many Black communities.

Colon (2000) has actually reminded us about this very issue some two decades ago when he noted:

> Historically Black Colleges and Universities presume to produce leaders of the black community (and in national and international affairs). How, though, can individuals become leaders and servants of a people about whom they know little because of lack of or limited organized exposure to and engagement in the accumulated knowledge base of that people? (p. 288)

It is clear that Colon's (2000) scholarly lamentation was inspired by the works of thinkers such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Carter G. Woodson who also raised similar concerns about the place and role of Negro colleges and universities. W. E. B. Du Bois, as cited in Colon (2000), noted,

"the American Negro problem is and must be the center of the Negro University" (p. 287). Similarly, Carter G. Woodson, as cited by Colon (2000), also argues, "the only question which concerns us is whether these 'educated persons' [educated Blacks] are actually equipped to face the ordeal before them or unconsciously contribute to their own undoing by perpetuating the regime [including ideas, norms, and ethos] of the oppressor" (p. 287). The late Pan-Africanist Kwame Nkrumah's ideas on neocolonialism connect well to the preceding statements. Discussing the idea of neo-colonialism (*new forms of European control and domination*), Nkrumah (1970) argued that "unless we [African countries and people of African descent] attain economic freedom, our struggle for independence will have been in vain, and our plans for social and cultural advancement frustrated" (p. 102). Nkrumah's caution to be vigilant against any attempt to frustrate the social and cultural advancement of Black people is consistent with the central idea of the Afrocentric theory which seeks to challenge what Asante (1987) describes as "radical critique of the Eurocentric ideology masquerading as a universal view" (p. 3).

It is time to revisit the central argument of this chapter regarding HBCUs and the place of Afrocentric ideas in these institutions. Two important points need to be emphasized: First, we argue, based on the analyses throughout this chapter, that HBCUs are not only relevant and important, but they also need to be applauded for their accomplishments in providing post-secondary education to Blacks despite myriad challenges. Second, while commending these institutions for their value and importance, it is also essential to highlight their shortfalls in taking systematic and intentional steps to integrate and lead in the area of advancing Afrocentric ideas on their campuses, and beyond. The present question: What should HBCUs do at this moment?

HBCUs definitely need to do more by fully embracing and producing scholars and future leaders in an organized exposure to the accumulated knowledge base on the Black experience (Colon 2000). Also important must be the constant recognition that HBCUs are Negro colleges and universities, as W. E. B. Du Bois has noted, and Negro or Black issues must be the central focus of their mission (Colon 2000). Moreover, as Colon (2000) has equally suggested, "HBCUs have the obligation to help change assumptions that have prevailed about the sanctity of Western civilization and the conventional ideologies that emanate from it" (p. 304). HBCUs also can do more from a policy standpoint. Kumah-Abiwu (2016) provides some ideas that may be useful here. According

to Kumah-Abiwu (2016), HBCUs should initiate engaged conversations with stakeholders from academic institutions, the community, and policy environments on how best to integrate Afrocentric ideas into their curricula regardless of the field of discipline. In this case, Kumah-Abiwu (2016) suggests that the Afrocentric concept is not only capable of improving the human condition in the Black world, but the collective consciousness of people of African descent (Asante 1998) can help attain a "cognitive freedom" for Black people through the knowledge of their history and culture. This "cognitive freedom" also provides another support for the ongoing discourse on why HBCUs need to take the lead in establishing graduate programs in Africana and Black Studies.

As many Afrocentric theorists have articulated, there is an "African way" that can help our understanding of the world around us. Asante has, for example, revealed this elsewhere when he posed the following question for our consideration: How do we study and interpret economics, health/environmental sciences, public health, and politics or policy studies from an Afrocentric perspective? (Zulu 2008). Another policy standpoint was raised in Colon's (2000) work. To Colon (2000), HBCUs need to participate together in consortia where human and financial resources are shared as they make efforts to fully embrace the Black experience and Afrocentric ideas, especially at the graduate level in their attempt to remain relevant in the future.

Conclusion

The unique nature of HBCUs in their extraordinary role to meet the educational needs of Black people in America will continue to be recognized and praised (Gasman 2013; Allen et al. 2007). At the same time, these historic institutions continue to face challenges in their changing pathways, especially with regard to funding issues, student enrollment, and the debate of their reliance on Eurocentric ideas vis-à-vis their Black identity (Redd 1998; Albritton 2012). Given what appears to be the dominance of Eurocentric ideas/ethos across the curricula of HBCUs (Rogers 2008), and the fact that these institutions were established to educate Black people (Gasman 2013; Colon 2000), one would expect them to take a leading role in fully embracing the Afrocentric idea. This does not seem to be the case. Drawing on the Afrocentric theory (Asante 1998), with relevant works from the extant literature, this chapter examined the changing pathways of HBCUs with emphasis on the extent

to which the Afrocentric or African-centered ideas/ethos (Asante 1998; Mazama 2001) are intentionally integrated into the praxis of HBCUs going forward. The analyses with supporting examples have revealed that HBCUs have more to do to fully embrace, lead, and deliberately integrate African-centered ideas. The chapter underscores the argument that HBCUs will be better served in the future if these institutions intentionally incorporate and fully embrace the ideals of the Afrocentric theory in their curricula and general institutional affairs.

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CHAPTER 9

The Changing Exasperations of Higher Education

Elaine Jessica Tamargo

Introduction

In Geiger's "The Ten Generations of American Higher Education" (2005), 400 years of the history of America's colleges and universities is examined, from the Colonial era and founding of Harvard to the present day. Higher education, especially more recently, has encouraged the façade of being post-racial through the rise of multiculturalism and a convenient lapse in memory with regard to higher education's colonial roots. Even a cursory examination of this history, clearly illuminates early US colleges and universities were built for white people, on land stolen from First Nation peoples, by enslaved Africans. The first chapter of Geiger's book focuses on the peculiarities of higher Education, and necessitates looking at it through two lenses: (1) the institution of higher education as a system, and (2) as individual institutions that function within that system (Corces-Zimmerman et al. 2020). Though Geiger covers a wide range of topics, he does little to explain why students, the

E. J. Tamargo (✉)
University of California, Los Angeles, CA, USA

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primary consumers of higher education, chose to enroll and participate in the first place. In interrogating how US higher education might address its historical and contemporary scaffolding of Whiteness, it is important to understand the changing motivations of students over time. Not only do these motivations reflect the social and historical influences driving the major transformations of higher education and the nation in general, but students have played and continue to play an integral role in advocating for change—change at the institutional level, change at the system level, and change to society as a whole.

In this chapter, I discuss the different forces historians have identified as inspiring students to engage higher education, focusing on a few major eras which connect to contemporary issues. The US Colonial Era provides the earliest context for framing the developments that follow. In the University Transformation Era, students' increasing focus on social aspects of higher education hint at its role in perpetuating elitism. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (or GI Bill) implemented during the Mass Higher Education Era invited a student population unlike any previous era, with completely new perspectives on reasons for engaging in higher education. I continue my examination by highlighting the factors impacting students, and how institutions have responded, most notably through the development of student affairs. In Chapter 1 of this book, Corces-Zimmerman et al. outline four dimensions of Whiteness in higher education—racial composition, physical structures, social/cultural norms, and organizational/curricular norms (2020). By reflecting on these select time periods, I propose ways in which higher education can learn from historical mistakes and address these four dimensions toward positive change. This chapter is meant to realistically consider the current context of higher education, and with it the challenges to advocating for change to a system that already is stretched by increasingly seeking to appeal to both public and private interests. In light of the unprecedented changes to higher education unfolding as a result of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the question whether higher education can meet these challenges is examined.

Whiteness and Social Stratification Through Higher Education

The Colonial Era—Perpetuating an Elite Class

During the Colonial Era, the purpose of higher education was conceptualized by founders who were almost exclusively religiously motivated. For the most part, this had very little to do with developing occupational skills and more to do with carrying out religious missions. For example, in his sermon *Model of Christian Charity*, Winthrop (1630) expressed the desire to create a refuge which later became Harvard College, where students felt they were called by God to be an example within an ideal society. Harvard was meant to be a beacon on a hill providing an example to the rest of the world. Within a few generations, however, American higher education abandoned this standard and focused more on student outcomes achieved through taking part in higher education.

The very few colonial colleges (nine by the end of the Colonial Era in 1789) were attended by so few students, they barely made a dent in the general population. Of the 3 million free colonists, only about 1,000 students were enrolled in college by 1789 (Cohen and Kisker 2010). Students, during this time, were "a relatively privileged group of [white] young men who were expected to be serious about their studies and their religion," (Thelin 2011, p. 24). But for the most part, not only did the Colonial Era college movement "fail to become as popular as the religious awakening," it also failed to "compete with the early discovery the American frontier was a potential and remarkably accessible source of material abundance," which is echoed in the small impact of higher education during this time (Rudolph 1990, p. 19). The colonists did not view college as a pathway to success because the open frontier provided more opportunities without the existing elitism of higher education. This view of college seems relatively far-fetched compared to today's popular opinion higher education is the primary gateway to social mobility; but for a time, a main purpose of education was "to identify and ratify a colonial elite," (Thelin 2011, p. 25).

Many would claim college students at the time (wealthy white men from prominent families) constituted a group that did not need education at all. The students of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton were from "mercantile wealth" and students almost assuredly had a stable and prosperous future without education (Thelin 2011, p. 24). However, after

the American Revolution, Rudolph (1990) claims there was a widely held belief higher education was now serving a new responsibility to a newly formed nation: "the responsibility to prepare young men who were to be responsible for citizenship, in a republic that must prove itself" and "the preparation for lives of usefulness of young men who also intended to prove themselves," (p. 40). These statements emphasize the entangling of student motivations, the evolving purpose of higher education, and the emerging social contract.

At a time when many abroad waited in earnest for the fledgling United States to fail as an independent nation, the evolving system of colleges took up the duty of educating men of potential influence in directing the nation toward stability. Unsurprisingly, the higher education system reflected the hegemony of other US institutions, serving white Anglo Protestant ideologies. In addition to the obvious representation of Whiteness through racial makeup of those in power, the budding political and economic structures of the nation actively incorporated policies scaffolding Whiteness. For example, discussions of the morality, purpose, and consequences of American slavery went, at least officially, uninterrogated and left for future generations to wrestle with. Although, the role of colleges and universities as a tool for social welfare were sown at this time, broadening the purpose of higher education in ways that persist today.

Lessons from the Colonial Era. First and foremost, to make any meaningful progress on dismantling Whiteness in higher education, institutions and the system as a whole must acknowledge institutional origins during the Colonial Era, that were established and bound by colonial ideas and practices. It is undeniable that virtually all higher education institutions have been built on land looted from First Nation Peoples, and any institution built before the 13th Amendment, ratified in 1865, more than likely was built by labor of enslaved Africans. For far too long, the system has pushed these histories into the shadows, hiding behind centuries of blurred narratives and strategically named buildings. Adding to the difficulty with openly recognizing the white supremacist roots of higher education is that institutions themselves do not seem ready to take the needed steps to remedy their historical injustices. While the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic is changing higher education's physical infrastructure to an unprecedented (and many assume, temporary) level, the move toward remote learning has provided opportunity to not only restructure, but to actually recreate spaces to move higher education away from perpetuating white supremacy. With that said, as institutions

assume the unprecedented undertaking to respond to the pandemic by accommodating spaces (both virtual and physical) in equitable ways, the imagination required to develop new and equitable spaces demands all constituents have input, including students, staff, faculty, administration, and even community members. And, even if the reorganization of higher education takes decades, beginning the process while including the perspectives of multiple constituents will at least provide the tools to begin to address higher education's history of glaring mistakes.

The University Transformation Era—Beyond Academics

The state of affairs regarding higher education between the end of the Civil War and World War II provides students with a rather dreary outlook. Academic standards were extremely lacking, and for the most part students were more focused on social networking and acquiring social capital. Upon enrollment, students learned they were not "seriously pressed by prevailing academic standards," (Rudolph 1990, p. 287), so one might ask why did they seek out higher education in the first place?

On the one hand, college during this time promised young people a chance to pursue the American dream, with widening access demonstrated by the trend of developing parallel colleges specifically for women beginning in the mid-1800s, and later for Black Americans (Harwarth, 2005). Still, college-going was seen as "a dream reserved first and foremost, though not exclusively, for male children of those who already enjoyed economic and social benefits," (Thelin 2011, p. 254). On the other hand, surveys of the vocational intentions of students and their socio-economic backgrounds during the 1920s and 1930s suggest "students aspired to the types of college training that connoted higher status than their parents enjoyed at the time," (Levine 1986, p. 117). This attention to intergenerational upward mobility indicated students did recognize the value of higher education as a vehicle for achieving that goal. According to an editorial in the *Daily Illini* entitled, "9.796 Students—Why Are They Here?", family prosperity and professional training were important [college-going] factors, as was "the opportunity to increase one's social prestige, particularly at home, was the chief reason for attendance," (Levine 1986, p. 116).

As a result, colleges and universities were forums for young people to participate in "fraternity initiations, weekend parties, homecoming extravaganzas, and football bowl games" that "reinforced established norms of

getting ahead in American society," (Thelin 2011, p. 254). These "wild activities" associated with undergraduate life solidified "the popular belief that 'going to college' was a rite of passage into the prestige of the American upper-middle class," (Thelin 2011, p. 254). Students embraced the idea going to college was "the modish, fashionable, acceptable thing to do," (Levine 1986, p. 116). Middle-class families during this time operated under the social pressure to send their children to college as an indicator of good parenting as opposed to encouraging the acquisition of knowledge (Levin 1986, p. 118). Thelin asserted the "social function of college coexisted with an increasingly potent albeit vague economic function," in that job applications asked to list if one had ever been to college, but nothing about whether one graduated or got a degree, as if simply attending in some manner was the extent of the value of higher education (2011, p. 254).

Student life on campus during this era greatly reflected these social motivations. Veysey notes a motto appropriately summed up the widely held view about education at the time adorns the walls of dorm room fraternity houses: "Don't Let Your Studies Interfere with Your Education," (1965, p. 272). Students, and families to some extent, believed academics had a place separate from, and not as important as, the real purposes of going to college. Professors and administration, however, seemed to feel differently, indicating a major disconnect between students and institution officials at this time. Some prominent university presidents like Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia, Daniel Coit Gilman of Johns Hopkins, and Stanford's David Starr Jordan warned academic standards "were threatened by an increasing number of socially motivated students," (Levine 1986, p. 115). Colleges and universities tried survey courses, honors programs, and similar activities in an attempt to strengthen academic life, but for the most part, they were largely unsuccessful. Overall, the social motivation for college-going was "more influential than ever before," (Levine 1986, p. 115). Before this period, the premise of attending college for the purpose of attaining knowledge thinly veiled the unmistakable social motivations.

Lessons from the University Transformation Era. Essentially, the social/cultural dimensions of higher education have existed alongside the academic dimension for most of its existence. Unsurprisingly, the norms of higher education reflect the white supremacist norms of the greater society. The social currency of taking part in higher education and adopting certain norms has long been touted as being as important

or even integral to the higher education experience. As stated before, any recommendation to dismantle Whiteness in higher education requires realistically appraising current circumstances. Thus, a call to reflect and remove all elitist practices at the university is simply idealistic and ignores the fact white supremacist norms flourish in all types of institutions. Alternately, higher education needs to invest financially and diligently in active practices to uplift Students of Color toward more equitable outcomes—both academically and socially. In addition to supporting more research on equitable outcomes, individual institutions should invest in campus-based research to identify inequities and develop solutions suitable for their campus population. Along with this introspection, campuses need to dismantle Whiteness particularly through security and patrol forces that consistently over-police Students of Color, reinforcing white as the norm. Similarly, curricular investment must reflect more equity. For instance, an endowed professorship in History should be matched with a similar position in Ethnic Studies; alumni donations to benefit historically white fraternities should earmark a percentage of such donations to be distributed to other non-white or multicultural fraternities; and general education curricula should include options that interrogate and highlight non-Western paradigms.

The GI Bill Era—A Whole New Student Population

Between 1945 and 1975, enrollment in higher education increased by more than 500%, growing from about 2 million to 11 million students (Cohen and Kisker 2010, p. 208). Students who previously could not afford higher education were taking advantage of financial aid available through the GI Bill as well as through federal and state grant and loan programs. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (GI Bill) was passed by Congress to avert massive unemployment and subsequent civil unrest when millions of servicemen returned home after World War II. Nearly half of the 15 million returned veterans participated in the higher education programs (Cohen and Kisker 2010, p. 194). For the first time, a very different population of student was entering colleges and universities at an extremely high volume. Having served in World War II, and later during the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, servicemen were older and had a greater span of time between high school and post-secondary education. Because of this, servicemen clearly had different expectations and motivations for going to college than the typical high school graduate.

GIs were typically depicted as "worldly and experienced" and "impatient with the juvenile features of college life" which was a swift and dramatic change from the socially-oriented students from the pre-war era (Thelin 2011, p. 266). Simply by the overwhelming presence of former servicemen, colleges and traditional activities had to be re-conceptualized. Moreover, GIs were portrayed as "pragmatic, hardworking, and in a hurry to complete their degrees," (Thelin 2011, p. 266). In addition to veering away from certain extracurricular activities (but demonstrating rather active participation in activities such as varsity sports), these students focused on using higher education for the pursuit and acquisition of academic knowledge and degree attainment. This difference in perspective led many servicemen to "employable fields such as business administration and engineering," (Thelin 2011, p. 266).

Thelin describes an interesting scenario regarding an economics class made up mostly of GI students: when learning about the inequities of the tax code in favoring wealthier families and business corporations, rather than considering changes in tax codes, many felt compelled to go into business as a profession and take part in the advantages of the tax code themselves (2011, pp. 266–267).

For the most part, the GI Bill was written and carried out without fully considering unintended consequences for colleges and universities, which had to adjust accordingly to massive spikes in enrollments, and to a new kind of student. At the institutional level, colleges and universities focused on recruitment strategies to attract former servicemen, who arrived along with college revenue in the form of federal dollars. Because many of these students were first-generation college enrollees coming from families that had "little experience with or expectation of a college education," colleges and universities edited recruitment brochures to appeal to servicemen of "serious purpose" who "mean business," (Thelin 2011, pp. 264, 266). They also adjusted admissions criteria to be more flexible to allow students advanced standing by demonstrating previous achievement. The large influx of predominantly male students also "masculinize[d] the postwar campus," and what was considered male-appropriate and female-appropriate areas of study became more defined.

Although I've focused on institutional impacts based on GI Bill recipients, this time of mass higher education touched virtually the entire American population for the first. Popular opinion at the time argued

anyone who did not want to go to college was "misguided and in need of special encouragement," (Cohen and Kisker 2010, p. 209).

Lessons from the Post-GI Bill Era. Although the GI Bill dramatically increased access to higher education for students of many different identities, today's reality is that college access continues to be an issue. While this reality is obscured by greater participation and completion rates overall, the stark contrasts are obvious at many flagship universities whose racial composition fails to reflect the demographics of their state population. Affirmative Action admissions policies continue to survive the seemingly never-ending challenges put forth by white plaintiffs (starting with Allan Bakke in 1978 to Abigail Fisher most recently). Further, the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the administration of standardized tests typically used for college admission, and some institutions and systems have allowed for a test-optional application. This moment provides an ideal opportunity to review and implement college admission processes that increase equity and seek to reflect local and national demographics in student populations.

Realizing the long history of higher education makes difficult efforts to rectify imbalanced racial compositions on campus immediately, but effort needs to be made. This includes expanding faculty and research pipeline programs to support more Students of Color in pursuing graduate school and careers in research and academia. Individual institutions, particularly public funded ones, need to assume some responsibility for education resources taken from their local communities and support and develop K-12 partnerships to create more avenues for higher education access.

The Contemporary Era—Promoting Private, or Individual Benefits

Cohen and Kisker dub the era since 1994 "Privatization, Corporation, and Accountability." This era also is noteworthy for encompassing the War on Terror, the Great Recession, and a global pandemic (2010, pp. 435–437). While attending colleges may seem far removed from these issues, the reverberations from these real-world events have trickled down impact students' college choices. The fallout from Hurricane Katrina, the rise in mass shootings, and most recently the mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic, has demonstrated a lack of preparedness by government to address social needs in the wake of natural and other disasters, as well as a general failure to support programs and initiatives to help agencies provide assistance in the aftermath of natural or other social

disruptions. Perhaps in response, students entering college increasingly demonstrate a civic mindedness in quantifiable measures when compared to other college cohorts (Hurtado 2005). A national study of incoming freshman by the Higher education Research Institute (HERI) in 2012 shows, "[i]ncoming students persist in putting a premium on job-related reasons to go to college," which reasonably can be linked to the economic climate following the Great Recession of 2008 (Pryor et al. 2012, p. 2).

For more than 50 years, the Freshman survey has asked students to list which factors are important in their decision to go to college. Looking at the trends related to student responses over time, almost all the listed college decision-making factors have increased over time in importance, which researchers believe indicates students view higher education as a multi-faceted experience (Pryor et al. 2007, p. 21). However, even with increases in commuter and part-time students, respondents to the freshman survey still view their time on campus as "prolonged adolescence," with Cohen and Kisker (2010) acknowledging the time spent partying has remained relatively consistent since the survey was first administered (pp. 480–481).

Tracking the shifts in what specific factors are found to be important also provides insight into how students' attitudes toward college have changed. Not surprisingly, the top two reasons for attending college in 1976, were "to learn about things that interest me" and "get a better job" remained the top two factors in 2006, representing two major influences that have impacted education since the late 1970s (Pryor et al. 2007, p. 21). One influence has been the dramatic increase in students going to college as "a way to make more money," which jumped from 49.9% in 1976 to 69.0% in 2006 (Pryor et al. 2007, p. 21). The other is the extent to which parents are involved in their child's decision to go to college. The percentage of students indicating "my parents wanted me to go" as an important reason for going to college has jumped from 30% for both men and women to 43.3% for men and 48.9% for women. Combined with students and families shouldering a larger financial burden to attend college also has elevated their expectations of what attending college should do for them, resulting in blaming the institution if it does not live up to student expectations (Cohen and Kisker 2010, p. 479).

The Challenges of Student Affairs as a Patchwork Solution

As the composition of students in US colleges and universities continues to diversify, it is increasingly important for higher education institutions to understand and accommodate the different backgrounds of students, from academic preparedness, and socio-economic status (SES), to expectations of college, and internalizing the benefits of college across personal, professional, and intellectual dimensions. A far cry from the early days of higher education, today's students recognize that college completion rather than simply participation is the currency needed to enjoy the benefits of higher education. Research asserts student involvement in campus life leads to greater social and academic integration, and promotes retention (Astin 1984; Tinto 1975). Tinto's (1975) Student Integration Model, one of the early models on student retention, asserts both academic and social integration increases students' institutional commitment, ultimately decreasing the likelihood of leaving college without a degree. However, the generalizability of the Student Integration Model for Students of Color has been questioned and is one of the most consistent criticisms of Tinto's model (Oseguera et al. 2009). Specifically, Tinto assumes college students must assimilate into the dominant campus culture in order to persist in college. This places the onus almost entirely on the student (Braxton et al. 1997) while ignoring an equally important input for success, the campus climate and the degree to which students, particularly Students of Color, feel welcome.

Guiffrida (2003) highlights the importance of ethnic-based organizations for cultivating students' sense of belonging on college campuses, particularly for minoritized students. For example, Latinx students involved in campus activities (i.e., academic, cultural, social, or mentoring) tend to persist to graduation (deAcosta 1996). Similarly, Black students who participate in campus activities are more likely to persist (Allen 1992). Fischer (2007) also found underrepresented Students of Color who have a non-positive perception of the campus climate are less happy and are more likely to drop out of college. Ultimately, many factors can impact completion rates of minority students, but the literature frequently points to campus climate, as either supporting minority student retention, or hindering it (Hurtado et al. 2012).

Unfortunately, most traditional higher education strategies and theories upon which institutional services and programs are based are outdated

and do not fit the needs of an increasingly diverse student body. For example, career development programs have yet to consider the particular needs of first-generation college students (whose parent(s) do not have a US college education). First-generation students are not new to higher education, and yet recent studies find first-generation students are less likely to seek out support from career advisors, engage with professors, seek out internships, or complete their degree within four years (Elfman 2018; Pascarella et al. 2004). Most strikingly, inequities persist after college. While early career earnings of first-generation students are comparable to right after college, first-generation students are less likely to enroll in graduate or professional school four to five years after graduation (Pascarella et al. 2004). Even if students fulfill the same requirements for degree completion, the inequity of outcomes post-college emphasizes how higher education's sorting function persists to stratify outcomes based on goals set during the colonial era.

The Crucial Pivot: Where to from Here?

In striving for institutional change, it is important for colleges and universities to consider trends in student motivations for pursuing higher education. In general, student motivations and the demographic of students entering a college can be reflective or resultant of the stated purpose of the institution, current cultural events, or the student's background. Likewise, campuses also can be impacted by these factors.

With unprecedented change transforming higher education due to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, including moving thousands of students from campus residence halls, transitioning to online instruction, curtailing campus-based activities, and the resultant budget challenges associated with all of these changes, institutions must recognize the need to adapt at this time to remain relevant. They also need to adapt to be more equitable. Despite its long history in the United States, higher education remains a peculiar institution due to its often schizophrenic adherence to its colonial and elitist roots while simultaneously representing itself as a path toward equitable change. Unfortunately, the recent systemic and unmitigated failures across a number of American institutions, including voting, policing, health care, and punishment, may dilute higher education claims to provide answers to current problems, since with few exceptions, colleges and universities have been the beneficiaries of Whiteness and white supremacy, since their inception. As increasingly diverse

students enroll in US higher education with the expectation of economic gain and workplace identification, institutions must be mindful to accommodate these expectations, and when necessary focus attention on social and institutional impediments in the way of student success, both within and after the university. While I do not pretend to offer this chapter as a comprehensive solution to dismantling Whiteness in higher education, the voices and perspectives of students, especially Students of Color, must be at center of any efforts toward organizational change. Supporting Black students, staff, faculty, and community directly confronts white supremacy in our institutions and social life. Contrary to the trends of corporatizing the college, it remains imperative colleges and universities retain value as social institutions working toward public good, rather than corporatized institutions focused relentlessly on their own survival.

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CHAPTER 10

Resisting the Neoliberal University with a General Strike

James Martel

Introduction

If one thing is clear about the struggle with neoliberalism in the current day university, it is that neoliberalism cannot be beaten at its own game. So much academic time and labor has been spent trying to justify, for example, why we should continue to have courses in the humanities at all or why faculty should retain control over their own intellectual property, all to no avail. To argue with neoliberalism on its own terms is to engage in a language of rubrics and data, to pore over excel spreadsheets and student learning outcomes, seeking to use information as a way to convince administrators and other neoliberal overlords why they shouldn't do what they are doing. None of this is going to save academia. The game is rigged; the rubrics and data dumps are decoys. The dirty secret of neoliberalism (a fairly open secret these days) is it is not a rational metrics oriented matter of dollars and cents, or whatever other

J. Martel (✉)
San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA, USA
e-mail: jmartel@sfsu.edu

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currency is in question. Instead neoliberalism—at least from the perspective of the neoliberal administrator—is about demonstrating one's own subservience to the market.[1] Often or even usually (maybe always?) this must be demonstrated in ways that actually go against one's own academic institution's financial and other interests (otherwise how could you prove you were devoted to the market at all costs?). Faculty who want to go into administration must demonstrate they are willing to destroy everything that is autonomous and undominated about academia. Even "well meaning" administrators cannot avoid implementing and reproducing neoliberal doctrines.

One oddity of neoliberalism is that virtually no one who enforces its chaotic mechanisms will admit they are neoliberal; indeed many a neoliberal decree has been preceded by someone saying "I'm probably the most anti neoliberal person there is…" before bringing down the neoliberal hammer on whatever obstacle is deemed as such.

But the point is that neoliberalism doesn't need any conscious enforcers, nor a smoky back room where neoliberals plot their domination of the world. Those rooms and plots used to exist at the University of Chicago and other places but they are beside the point now. Neoliberalism has spilled beyond the boundaries of a specific ideology per se to become ontological. That is to say, it has become what passes for reality in the world; it amounts to what Foucault calls a "grid of intelligibility" wherein everything is screened through its logics and its apparatus of power.[2] Even leftists who oppose neoliberalism are to some extent caught up in this logic system simply because it is so pervasive, not only as a system of control but also (and more importantly) as a system of thought, a way of knowing. In this way, neoliberalism is, in some sense, the only game in town. Everything has to be justified using neoliberal language; it has become the sole basis for reason and logic in our time (for example, recently in California an attempt to end the death penalty was done exclusively based on the cost of maintaining prisoners on death

[1] Michel Feher makes this case in a lecture series that he gave at Goldsmiths College, http://www.gold.ac.uk/visual-cultures/guest-lectures/. See also Brown, W. (2015). *Undoing the demos: Neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. New York: Zone Books.

[2] Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality*, Vol. 1. New York: Penguin, p. 93. In his lecture series "the Birth of Biopolitics," Foucault lays out the logic of the grid of intelligibility in great detail. Considering that he gave these lectures in the late 1970s, his prescience is amazingly accurate. See Foucault, M. (2008). *The birth of biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*. New York: Saint Martin's Press.

row year after year). Accordingly, appealing to reason and logic to argue against neoliberalism is a total waste of time; it amounts to using the language of a former—liberal—ontology in this new neoliberal context. The same words that made one kind of sense then (and even then they served very dark purposes) make a different kind of "sense" now.[3]

For this reason, in this chapter I will argue the only way to contest neoliberalism is through a complete refusal of its fundamental bases. Anything less will not work (and has already been tried). Academics organizing against neoliberalization must not engage in negotiations, or cajoling, or begging. None of this will be effective because the very terrain of language has been coopted and usurped by neoliberal logics. No matter how destructive or foolish a particular act might be it will most likely be done anyway because what neoliberal administrators say they want and what they actually want (or, more accurately still, what neoliberalism wants through them) are two different things. No matter how much money is out there, neoliberalism will always cry poverty because precarity is the only way it knows to continue its path of reckless domination (it was recently revealed the California State University system was sitting on a 1.5 billion—yes billion—dollar slush fund after insisting it was absolutely broke for years. This in a state that is itself the fifth largest economy in the world in a period—at the time—of massive growth). No matter how many charts and graphs are enlisted to make dollar and cents based arguments about saving the humanities (or more likely, because we all have to use neoliberal talk to get anything, why the humanities are a far better investment than STEM) they will be ignored because neoliberalism has already decided it can monetize the sciences in a way it can't do with the humanities (and anyway, as previously noted, making money is never the point anyway; actually *losing* money is the point).

Instead of these attempts to argue from within the system at the neoliberal university, I will argue what academic resisters (like neoliberalism's resisters more generally) need to do to is to engage in a general strike. The general strike has a very distinct history and takes on a particular

[3] I think part of what is interesting about this situation is that any of us who are older than, say 40 or so, grew up under a previous ontology. Therefore many who were born before the advent of neoliberalism as a global ontology still think in previous terms. Or perhaps we only *think* we think in those terms. I actually believe that we've all been transformed but the older among us may be confused by the contrasts produced by such monumental change. For younger people, who have nothing to compare this time to, this is not so much of a problem.

form that renders it in some ways relatively immune from the siren song of neoliberal ontologies. The general strike, as I will explain, is very different from an ordinary strike. I am as excited as the next leftie about the rise of strikes all over the United States in the K-12 system, and mainly from the deepest of red states (West Virginia, Kentucky, Arizona, etc.). Often these strikes have been done against local union leadership which has itself—like the U.S. labor movement as a whole—succumbed to a great deal to of neoliberal logics. However, my enthusiasm for this movement is limited by my expectations about what they already have it already has and will actually be able to accomplish. The kinds of strikes they have organized, although widespread, have made relatively modest gains: small raises which do not end a life of penury for school teachers, an ongoing modus vivendi with charter schools (which is no modus vivendi at all since charter schools were designed to destroy the public school system and are well on their way to achieving that goal) and a general sense of slowing rather than reversing the ongoing diminishment of education in this country by the forces of privatization. Despite displaying an enormous amount of courage, organizing and resistance, these strikers don't have much more than that to show for all of their efforts.

A general strike is different. It doesn't mean going out for a day or two or even for weeks until some set of specific demands are met. It means ceasing all educationally related work—that means everyone from full professors to lecturers to office staff to gardeners, nurses, janitors and of course students—until the entire edifice of neoliberal dominance of universities is removed. What a post-neoliberal university would look like (at least one that came out of a general strike) is an open question. Insofar as the previous liberal academic order was itself rife with inequalities based on race, gender, job title, and so forth, a return to that order in and of itself would not be a resolution of the kinds of problems the general strike would set out to address. A massive restructuring of a university would radically reduce, and preferably even eliminate, the concept of an "administration" over faculty, student, and staff. It would certainly mean a return to completely free education at all public universities with full stipends for students in need. It would mean the end of institutional racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, and transphobia as standard neoliberal practices that divide and conquer. It would mean the end of white supremacy as a ruling doctrine for academic life.

The reader may well at this point have concluded this essay is pure pie in the sky. The kinds of solutions I am looking at may seem to be utterly

impossible, possibly unthinkable. I would push back on that assumption. The very fact this seems impossible suggests the degree to which we have all bought into (often very much against our will) the ontological status of neoliberalism. As Margaret Thatcher was fond of saying "There is No Alternative" (helpfully rendered into the acronym TINA). TINA pretty much encapsulates the neoliberal conceit that it is unrivalled, a true end of history. In a similar vein, the leftist blogger, scholar, and author Mark Fisher famously said it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism (although in his case he was being critical instead of being celebratory about this).[4]

Fortunately for all of us, history never actually ends and one ontology will eventually give way to another. But does that mean we have to sit around and wait until neoliberalism falls apart from its own internal rot (which is ample)? I for one would definitely reject that route insofar as it is far from clear whatever regime replaces neoliberalism will not be worse (so far signs look promising this is what will in fact happen). For this reason, I think it behooves us to look closely at the models of the general strike I will describe in the following pages. Not only does this form of strike engage with the political problem of how to contend with the neoliberal state, its laws and social structures, but it also engages with the problem of ontology, with the "reality" of neoliberalism, its seeming endlessness and ubiquity. Furthermore and perhaps most importantly of all, the general strike offers something besides the purely negative model of resistance to neoliberalism itself for, as I will argue further, through this model other political, economic and social forms emerge that offer radically different ways to structure and think about the university and those of us who work and live in its midst.

In order to draw out the nature of a general strike, how it works and what it looks like, I will examine two thinkers, Walter Benjamin and W. E. B. DuBois, who respectively describe the theoretical model of the general strike (Benjamin) and a particularly American history of a general strike (DuBois) wherein Black American slaves rose up to end slavery as well as the Civil War. I will also briefly draw upon the history of a massive general strike in Seattle, Washington in 1919, drawing especially on the work of one of its principle thinkers, Anna Louise Strong, to elucidate a

[4] Fisher, M. (2009). *Capitalist realism: Is there no alternative?* Washington, DC: Zero Books. p. 1.

bit more of the nature of this singular political and social action and how it might apply in an academic context.

Benjamin on the Political Versus the General Strike

Let me begin with a consideration of Walter Benjamin's position on the general strike, something he outlines in his 1921 essay "Critique of Violence." That essay more generally calls into question the bases of legal authority, the way the law tends to favor its own self-promotion over and above any concern with justice or the interests of legal subjects. For Benjamin all of the racism and violence of law as a practice stems from a basic anxiety on the part of the law that it has no true legitimate basis. For Benjamin the state must kill and the law must punish in order to establish their own predominance and even their right to exist at all. We are not supposed to ask the question "why do we need the state or the law as such?" because to ask that question is to get at the heart of the source of its legitimacy (the same exact thing is true, I would argue, of school administrations. We aren't supposed to even be able to imagine that we academic workers would all be far better off without them).

The state and the law promote themselves through what Benjamin calls "mythic violence," a form of projection of authority and power that is illicit in the sense of not actually having the absolute basis it claims to have in some ancient—but obscure—set of principles. Despite this effective lack of a foundation, and their corresponding violent self-assertions, Benjamin tells us that the state and the law nonetheless serves as the basis for our contemporary political, legal, and economic order.[5]

In the face of the violence of the law, Benjamin proffers what he calls the proletariat general strike as the ultimate instance of nonviolent resistance to the predations of capitalism and the political and social forms it favors. I should add here in speaking of non-violence, Benjamin doesn't necessarily mean pacifism and a restraint from all kinds of physical violence per se see. In the original German version of the "Critique of Violence," the word "*Gewalt*," which is consistently translated as violence into English, means something more like "force"; the violence in this case is not always physical in nature but once again a matter of illicit projection

[5] Benjamin, W. (1996). Critique of violence. In M. Bullock & M. W. Jennings (Eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected writings Vol. 1, 1913–1926*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 249.

of authority out into the world.[6] As for physical violence, there are times when Benjamin allows for that (such as the right of self-defense) despite his allegiance to a larger practice of non-violence.

Benjamin notes in its ordinary form, the strike (which he calls the political strike) is the single instance of violence the state tolerates beyond its own violent manifestations. While he acknowledges we tend to think of such strikes as nonviolent themselves insofar as they represent more of a withdrawal from work rather than an active (and violent) engagement with their bosses, nonetheless:

> The moment of violence, however, is necessarily introduced, in the form of extortion, into such an omission, if it takes place in the context of a conscious readiness to resume the suspended action under certain circumstances that either have nothing whatever to do with this action or only superficially modify it. Understood in this way, the right to strike constitutes in the view of labor, which is opposed to that of the state, the right to use force in attaining certain ends.[7]

In other words, the political strike is violent because it is an attempt to fight capitalism on its own terms. In the face of the kinds of extortion workers ordinarily experience from their bosses, the political strike is a kind of counter-extortion, seeking to force the state to agree to certain conditions about salaries, working conditions and benefits and so forth as a cost of returning to work. Capitalism as such is therefore generally accepted by the political strike and the political strike can be considered to be violent in this way as well insofar as it tacitly supports these illicit forms of authority.

Citing Georges Sorel, who is the original author of the distinction between the political and the revolutionary general strike, Benjamin tells us "the political general strike demonstrates how the state will lose none of its strength, how power is transferred from the privileged to the privileged, how the mass of producers will change their masters."[8]

[6] At the same time, Benjamin offers that "Sorel has explained, with highly ingenious arguments, the extent to which such a rigorous conception of the general strike per se is capable of diminishing the incidence of actual violence in revolutions." Ibid., p. 246.

[7] Ibid., p. 239.

[8] Ibid., p. 246. Benjamin uses the word "general" for both forms of strikes. Thus he speaks in this passage about the "political general strike" whereas elsewhere he speaks of the "proletarian general strike." For the sake of simplicity and because the term "general

Benjamin goes on to say "In contrast to this political general strike… the proletarian general strike sets itself the sole task of destroying state power."[9] Once again citing Sorel, he writes the proletarian general strike "nullifies all the ideological consequences of every possible social policy; its partisans see even the most popular reforms as bourgeois…This general strike clearly announces its indifference toward material gain through conquest by declaring its intention to abolish the state."[10] In this way, this form of general strike is an absolute refusal of capitalism and its logics.

In his most well-known statement about the general strike as a mode of resistance, Benjamin writes:

> Whereas the first mode of interruption of work [the political strike] since it causes only an external modification of labor conditions, the second [the general strike] as a pure means, is nonviolent. For it takes place not in readiness to resume work following external concessions and this or that modification to working conditions, but in the determination to resume only a wholly transformed work, no longer enforced by the state, an upheaval that this kind of strike not so much causes as consummates. For this reason, the first of these undertakings [the political strike] is lawmaking but the second anarchistic.[11]

In referring to "pure means," Benjamin is describing what happens when one's ends are removed from a particular situation. Normally under conditions of capitalism, for Benjamin, all of our ends are a reflection of our capitalist context as well as the larger forces of whatever ontology happens to dominate at any particular time. If our ends are so thoroughly determined then it is critical to abandon, not only the practices of work (as the political strike does as well) but also the entire ideological edifice upon which those practices are based. Attaining "pure means" implies, having abandoned all of the goals capitalism has fomented in us. In this way, we pursue only means themselves which therefore become liberated from serving their usual ends and turn into something different ("pure means").

strike" is usually understood as reflecting the more radical political challenge, I've used the terms "political strike" and "general strike" throughout.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

In this way the proletarian general strike works on both a material and ideological (and I would further add, affective) basis. It is as much oriented toward the bosses whose system of control is being utterly rejected as it is toward the striker herself, changing the nature of her subjecthood in the process.

For this reason, Benjamin tells us one of the attributes of a proletarian general strike (as opposed to a political one) is it rejects "every kind of program, of utopia—in a word, of lawmaking—for the revolutionary movement."[12] Whereas ordinary political strikes are always marked by a list of demands, the proletarian general strike has no demands at all. It seeks the end of, rather than accommodation with, any possible capitalist interlocutor.

These factors are critical for thinking about how a general strike could accomplish the end of neoliberalism (and hopefully of liberalism too, while they are at it). It speaks precisely to our current situation in which it is impossible to negotiate or argue with neoliberalism because, as already noted, it has become ontological. Under such conditions our own words, thoughts, and discourses are contaminated by what could be called "impure ends." The general strike then serves in the same way as violence does for Frantz Fanon in his discussion of the colonized subject; it serves to break the striker from her own mental subservience by dramatizing her break from a given ontology altogether.[13] Although Benjamin's version is deemed nonviolent and Fanon's is nothing but violence, I would still argue there is a psycho-social dimension of resistance that links these two thinkers quite closely (in part because once again Benjamin's notion of non-violence does not completely break with the possibility of actual physical violence; one could consider his notion of non-violence as being anti-ontological rather than being opposed to physical violence per se).

[12] Ibid.

[13] See Fanon, F. (2004). On violence. *The wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, commenting on the role of ontology in colonial politics, Fanon writes: "Ontology—once it is finally admitted as leaving existence by the way side—does not permit us to understand the being of the Black man. For not only must the Black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man. Some critics will take it on themselves to remind us that this proposition has a converse. I say this is false. The Black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man." Fanon, F. (1994). *Black skin, white masks*. New York: Grove Press, p. 110.

Perhaps most critically for my own purposes is Benjamin's comment: whereas the political strike is "lawmaking," the general strike is "anarchistic." For Benjamin, to be "lawmaking" means to take part in mythic violence, to project an unproblematic form of law and state power (or at least to fail to contest it in any way). By calling the general strike "anarchistic," Benjamin is offering a key insight into how the general strike works. Here again, an analogy with Fanon is in order. In *The Wretched of the Earth,* Fanon writes:

> even if the armed struggle had been symbolic, and even if they have been demobilized by rapid decolonization, the people have time to realize that liberation was the achievement of each and every one of them and no special merit should go to the leader. Violence hoists the people up to the level of the leader…When they have used violence to achieve national liberation, the masses allow nobody to come forward as a "liberator."[14]

Although Fanon does not use the language of anarchism in the same way Benjamin does, it seems clear what he is referring to is a kind of leaderlessness as a mode of organizing and resisting that relates to the anarchism Benjamin espies in the general strike as well. This helps us to see what could be called the positive politics that comes out of the general strike: it is not just a form of resistance but also an alternative political model with deep connections to anarchism as a form of practice (more on that in the conclusion).

W. E. B. Du Bois and the General Strike by Slaves

In order to get a better sense of how a general strike works in practice—and also how many of the theoretical points Benjamin describes in his essay "Critique of Violence," can be found to take place in the actual world—let me turn now to the work of W. E. B. Du Bois. In *Black Reconstruction in America,* Du Bois tells the story of how a general strike by Black slaves was the decisive element in ending the civil war and slavery itself. In fact he describes two general strikes by slaves, first a strike against southern slavers via a mass defection by half a million (out of a total population of four million) slaves and then a second strike against some of the

[14] *The wretched of the Earth*, p. 51.

northern generals who essentially tried to reimpose slavery on freed slaves by using them for unpaid labor for their own purposes.

In *Black Reconstruction in America*, Du Bois is very clear that the Union had no intention whatsoever to liberate slaves. From Lincoln downwards, the idea was to keep slavery but limit it to those states in which it was already being practiced. Escaped slaves who made it north were mostly returned to their masters for much of the first year or so of the war. The northern army also initially rejected attempts by slaves to join their ranks. This gave the South a massive early advantage in the war insofar as they had ready at hand a reserve army of Black slaves to raise crops and tend to the local economy while the white southern men fought the war. The Union had no such reserve. As Du Bois tells us "The Southern worker, Black and white, held the key to the war; and of the two groups, the black worker raising food and raw materials held an even more strategic place than the white."[15]

Yet, despite the Union's initial unwillingness to receive slaves into their own ranks, the slaves kept coming anyway. Plans by a few forward thinking Northern officers to hatch a vast conspiracy by secretly arming and inciting slaves came to nothing. Du Bois writes: "Such plans came to naught for the simple reason that there was an easier way involving freedom with less risk."[16] Du Bois adds:

> At first, the rush of the Negroes from the plantations came as a surprise and was variously interpreted [by Union officers]. The easiest thing to say was that Negroes were tired of work and wanted to live at the expense of the government; wanted to travel and see things and places. But in contradiction to this was the extent of the movement and the terrible suffering of the refugees. If they were seeking peace and quiet, they were much better off on the plantations than trailing in the footsteps of the army or squatting miserably in the camps. They were mistreated by the soldiers; ridiculed; driven away, and yet they came.[17]

[15] Du Bois, W. E. B. (1998). *Black reconstruction in America 1860–1880*. New York: The Free Press, p. 63.

[16] Ibid., p. 66.

[17] Ibid., p. 67.

As Du Bois explains it, the slaves were motivated by one overriding desire: freedom. They readily risked their lives and the lives of their children in order to get away from the certainty, the endlessness—and I would also add the ontology—of slavery (paradoxically by removing Black people from ontology altogether) as the mode that organized their life. Thus, Du Bois goes on to say:

> This was not merely the desire to stop work. It was a strike on a wide basis against the conditions of work. It was a general strike that involved directly in the end perhaps a half million people. They wanted to stop the economy of the plantation system, and to do that they left the plantation.[18]

This is where the second general strike comes in. As the slaves left southern plantations in droves, a sustained attempt by some Union generals and other military officials to effectively reinslave them met with absolute resistance by the slaves themselves. As the Union army began to take over larger sections of territory in the South, Du Bois writes:

> From 1862 to 1865, many different systems of caring for the escaped slaves and their families in this area were tried. [General] Butler and his successor, Banks, each sought to provide for the thousands of destitute freedmen with medicine, rations and clothing.…On January 30, 1863, [Banks] issued a general order making labor on public works and elsewhere compulsory for Negroes who had no means of support. Just as soon, however, as Banks tried to drive the freedmen back to the plantations and have them work under a half-military slave régime, the plan failed. It failed, not because the Negroes did not want to work, but because they were striking against these particular conditions of work.[19]

As Du Bois explains it, it was the general strike and not any desire or action of the Union that freed the slaves and, in the process, won the war for the North. He says,

> It was in vain that Lincoln, with his rushed entreaties and then commands to Frémont in Missouri, not to emancipate the slaves of rebels, and then had to hasten similar orders to Hunter in South Carolina. The slave, despite every effort, was becoming the center of the war. Lincoln, with

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., p. 68.

> his uncanny insight, began to see it. He began to talk about compensation for emancipated slaves.[20]

Although Du Bois tells us Lincoln "simply could not envisage free Negroes in the United States," the actions of newly self-emancipated slaves forced his hand. He writes:

> Meantime, the slave kept looming. New Orleans was captured and the whole Black population of Louisiana began streaming towards it. When Vicksburg fell, the center of perhaps the vastest Negro population in North America was tapped. They rushed into the Union lines. Still Lincoln held off and watched symptoms.[21]

Du Bois concludes by saying

> In August [1865] Lincoln faced the truth, front forward; and that truth was not simply that Negroes ought to be free; it was that thousands of them were already free, and that either the power which slaves put into the hands of the South was to be taken from it, or the North could not win the war. Either the Negro was to be allowed to fight or the draft itself would not bring enough white men into the army to keep up the war.[22]

In looking at Du Bois' analysis of the General Strike, it is critical not to overstate the comparison between the situation of Black slaves in the South and the condition of academic workers under contemporary neoliberal conditions. Even the most exploited lecturer in academia is in a vastly preferable situation than any slave. And of course the condition of many tenured professors—who are overwhelmingly white—can often be extremely privileged, quite the opposite of what it means to be a slave. The point here then is not to say academic workers are like slaves but rather to show the slaves demonstrate the power of the general strike as a tactic against an oppressive and even ontological system that seems to have no solution and no end.

As Du Bois makes clear, no one with power or authority was interested in freeing slaves either on the Union or Confederate side. For the slaves

[20] Ibid., p. 82.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

themselves, there was no question of negotiating or bargaining with their white oppressors. An ordinary strike, in which some kinds of concessions are made, would be utterly futile in this context, probably resulting in massive injury, death, and punishment of any slaves involved in such a movement. The slaves were in no position to make any particular demands and their overlords wouldn't have accepted any demands anyway. It took a general strike, an absolute refusal to continue to work under present conditions to break the back, not only of the institution of slavery, but perhaps even more critically, of the mindset in which the end of slavery was literally unimaginable.

Du Bois reminds us that even a few months before the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, the general belief system was that slavery was going to go on forever among whites and even to some extent among Black people as well. It took a general strike to change consciousness for everyone.

For Du Bois the general strike wasn't planned. But it wasn't passive either; it represented a conscious decision on the behalf of over half a million people; although they faced enormous obstacles, something had changed in power relations and it was effectively now or never to stop a system they had believed they would never outlive (nor their children, nor their children's children). And because the Confederacy was watching for an uprising more along the line of Nat Turner or John Brown rather than for what actually happened, they were utterly unprepared for this general strike. In a sense this exposes a key vulnerability of those who administer ontological forms of domination: if their subjects are to some extent trapped by its logic, the overlords are completely bound by it. The southern slave masters not only didn't but couldn't see the general strike coming; it lay outside the bounds of what was intelligible and, in that way, succeeded in a way a more expected form—a slave revolt, for example—would not. Du Bois tells us the southerners were so confident the slaves would remain quiescent on the plantations that they literally based their entire strategy on that expectation. When the general strike began in earnest, the power of slavery, its ontological supremacy and lastingness, vanished in an instant and the south fell very quickly from that point on.

It could be argued that, for all of its success, the general strike Du Bois describes did not ultimately result in true freedom for Black people in America. Besides some key moments in the Reconstruction era that Du Bois carefully denotes, we see a shift in rather than an end to forms of

oppression for Black people in the United States. The situation of Black people changed from slavery itself to segregation, lynching, the destruction of Black Wall Street, mass incarceration, redlining, police killing of Black people, and other modes of a new ontology which rose to replace the old. This too offers an important lesson for future strikers: the forces one is up against do not disappear as a result of a general strike and one must be ceaselessly ready to resume the kinds of refusals and alternative political social formations this kind of strike inaugurates and makes possible.

The General Strike in Seattle: "No One Knows Where" It Will Go

The case of the Seattle general strike of 1919 offers a very different model and example of how general strikes can—and also sometimes cannot—work to radically change a given situation. In some ways the Seattle general strike better fits the model of what Benjamin called a political vs. a revolutionary general strike (then again, he even included the German revolution led by Rosa Luxemburg in the political category!).[23] Even so, it offers some important lessons in how to move from an ordinary (internal to an ontology) to an extraordinary (external to that ontology) political movement.

The Seattle general strike took place over the course of six days in February, 1919 beginning on February 6th and ending on February 11th. Nearly 100,000 workers took part in it. The general strike was meant to support a strike by shipyard workers which had begun two weeks earlier. The shipyard workers were striking for higher wages and also the ability to have an closed—as opposed to an open—shop (so union membership would be automatic and required for every worker). As a response to the action by the shipyard workers, a "universal strike" was called for by the Seattle Central Labor Council as well as many of the pro-labor journals in order to support the shipyard workers and to build a stronger and more united union movement.[24]

[23] A couple of years before Benjamin wrote his "Critique of Violence" Rosa Luxemburg helped to foment a communist revolution in Germany. The revolution was brutally repressed and Luxemburg was murdered along with other revolutionary leaders such as Karl Liebknecht.

[24] "All Seattle Unions are Asked to Strike," *Seattle Union Record*, January 25, 1919. For a book that covers many of the basics of the Seattle general strike see, Friedheim,

Although, as already noted, the strike fit some of the conventions of the political strike, there are a few signs something more radical was afoot. First of all there is the fact that this was the first general strike in US history so by definition, this was something novel and unexpected (the vitriol in the anti-labor press which fulminated about "Bolshevism" and anarchism attest to the degree to which this strike struck fear in the ruling classes).

Also, there are some signs that at least some of the strike organizers had ideas beyond the usual political limitations. In the *Seattle Union Record*, an editorial entitled "No One Knows Where" by the socialist editor and radical labor activist Anna Louise Strong, she gave an indication of how she at least thought about this strike (but given the way her essay was copied and disseminated, it seems a lot of other people thought the same way). Strong offered those who felt the strike fund should be used only to feed striking workers and not the larger population, should take note "not the withdrawal of labor power but the power of the workers to manage will win this strike."[25] In other words, this was not just an isolated tactic (like the political strike) but something larger with a larger view of social and economic transformation. The same editorial went on to say:

> Labor will not only SHUT DOWN the industries but Labor will REOPEN, under the management of the appropriate trades, such activities as are needed to preserve public health and public peace. If the strike continues Labor may feel led to avoid public suffering by reopening more and more activities.[26]

Here we see a sentiment that goes well beyond simply bargaining with or threatening capitalism. The idea of worker self-management of industries that Strong expresses here comes during a time—just as is also the case in our own time—when such a viewpoint is unthinkable, much less expressible (doing away with university administrations? Impossible! What would we do without them? Except teach the classes, clean the

R. L. (2018). *The Seattle general strike: Centennial edition*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.

[25] Ibid., ["No One Knows Where,"] February 4, 1919. In the original this sentence is all in capitals.

[26] Ibid.

classrooms, tend to the physical plants, feed the students, and ourselves, etc.).

Here, the positive value of the general strike—the effect on workers' mutual solidarity, the development of worker-run collectives, the connection to the larger population, and a general sense that it is possible to live a life without recourse to capitalism at all—collectively serve to point to the possibility of a much more radical outcome than what actually took place.

Even the title of Strong's essay "No One Knows Where," which is restated in the essay itself speaks to the kind of open-endedness of a general strike, even when it formally is oriented toward a specific list of demands. By offering "no one knows where" this strike will end up, Strong was showing herself—and, by extension, the larger movement she was speaking of and to—that even a strike that began with ordinary goals might become something utterly different and radical.

This tracks well with something Benjamin says in the "Critique of Violence" (which was written two years after this strike in Seattle (although he does not make mention of it). There, Benjamin offers:

> to induce men to reconcile their interests peacefully without involving the legal system, there is, in the end, apart from all virtues, one effective motive that often enough puts into the most reluctant hands pure instead of violent means: it is the fear of mutual disadvantages that threaten to arise from violent confrontation, whatever the outcome might be. Such motives are clearly visible in countless cases of conflict of interest between private persons.[27]

Here, Benjamin is offering people may enter into an action like a strike with very selfish motives or at least motives that are given to them by their (ontological) context. The fear of violence may be one such motive. But along the way, through their engagement with pure means, they are diverted to something far more radical. Marx says very much the same about the motivations individuals may have for joining the communist movement vs. what they ultimately get out of the movement itself. He writes: "When communist *workmen* associate with one another, theory, propaganda, etc. is their first end. But at the same time, as a result of this association, they acquire a new need—the need for society—and what

[27] "Critique of Violence," p. 245.

appears as a means becomes an end."[28] Here too we may be seeing an inkling of "pure means", an outcome that is induced by participation in something in which "no one knows where" it will go (that is to say, it is going beyond the bounds of ontology itself).

In this way, although the Seattle general strike was perhaps formally political rather than revolutionary in its structure, it would have been very easy for that strike to burst its bounds as an ordinary strike and turn into a radical strike that altered the workers just as it altered their working conditions. I think Anna Louise Strong, for one, understood and articulated this radical possibility perfectly well.

I think the fact this strike became general rather than specific, as well as the fact it was so successful and so widespread (by all accounts all commerce in Seattle ground to a halt during those six days) meant the strike was not going to be what it was initially intended to be by many of its participants, not simply a stronger version of the coercion (and hence, by Benjamin's account, violence) political strikes produce. The fact of the strike's generality helped to transform it into something else, at least potentially, at least for a time.

The fact the strike only lasted six days is not in and of itself a reason to discount the power and radical potential of the strike altogether. The reasons for the end of the strike took various forms including the aggression of the mayor and police, pressure from more conventional nationwide unions like the AFL to stop the strike, and the difficulties of keeping the strike going at the massive level the General Strike Committee had sustained up until then.[29]

This premature end may also have come in part from the confusion of forms in this case, the presence of things like a list of demands and the fact the general strike itself was ostensibly merely a sympathy strike to support the shipyard workers (so it was still expected to obey the conventions of conventional strikes even if it was anything but that). This

[28] Marx, K. (1978). Economic and philosophical manuscripts of 1844. *The Marx Engels Reader*. New York: W.W. Norton, p. 99.

[29] I should add that I myself am very involved with my own faculty union. I am not writing to say that such work is worthless—I wouldn't spend so much time and effort if I thought so and I admire and appreciate the work of so many union siblings who give themselves over to this kind of work—but only that it can only mollify and slow down rather than reverse neoliberal predations.

example reminds us although the political form *may* lead to something more radical as Strong clearly hoped it would, it also may not.

Even so, I think the Seattle general strike helps us to think more clearly about the possibility of how even a more conventional labor movement can be the nucleus of something far more transgressive. That, along with the fact for a brief time, the Seattle general strike experimented with worker-run factories—hence pointing to the potentially anarchist organization of labor more generally—demonstrates the value and the usefulness of this example.

Conclusion

A General University Strike Against Neoliberalism?

Thinking about the various examples I have looked at in this chapter, the theoretical model supplied by Benjamin, the case of the general strike by Black slaves in the US South described by Du Bois and the Seattle general strike and the thinking of Strong, we can begin to see what some of the building blocks of a radical general strike against neoliberalism in the university might look like. I think such a strike, if isolated from larger worker's movements, might not quite live up to its full potential. After all a general strike has to be, well, general. But even if it were confined to academia, such a form of a (limited) general strike would remain a powerful way to face off against a body of implacable administrators where no words (or charts, or excel spread sheets, graphs, etc.) are able to move them.

The general strike asserts this is not just business as usual. It announces not only to administrators but to the strikers themselves something has shifted, ontology itself is now possibly in question. In fact, I think it's clear from the preceding that the greatest effects of the general strike come on the part of the strikers rather than on those whom they oppose. Their opponents only see the failure of their regime if the strike is successful. The strikers themselves, on the other hand, are ushered into an entirely different way of life (or perhaps more accurately, ushered into life itself, into the life neoliberalism has been slowly but surely—and then not so slowly—eating away at), and this, by their own actions.

By way of conclusion, let me return to Benjamin's comment while the political strike is "lawmaking," the general strike is "anarchistic." I think it is very important to connect the general strike to anarchism as a political

movement and set of practices. The very name "anarchism" suggests its opposition to archism, a set of political systems based on hierarchy and projection, which I would define in our own time as being equated with neoliberalism itself.[30]

In many ways neoliberalism—at least in terms of its US variant with which I am most familiar—poses as being post political and highly egalitarian. In modes like the "sharing society" which purports to be about human connection rather than profit (but where the exact opposite is true), or in terms of the rampant libertarianism of the tech world, the broader practices of neoliberalism pretend to be about casual and unenforced forms of sociality, as if the internet and other modalities of neoliberalism were all about free choice and easiness. Yet the regimes of contemporary neoliberalism are, in my view, if anything *more* archist, more hierarchical than much of what preceded them. It is no accident, I think, aside from the period of slavery itself, that social and economic inequality have reached new heights in the United States just as neoliberalism has come to the fore.

This is no less true at the level of the university as it is in the country—and indeed the world—as well. If neoliberalism is an extreme form of archism, one that is perfectly comfortable showing a fascist as well as a liberal face when needed, then anarchism is, I would argue, the way out of this entanglement with the general strike being a principle mode by which that anarchism can be realized.

Insofar as neoliberalism takes up all of the air in the room, it becomes impossible to recognize the forms of academic work that are existing under the aegis of neoliberalism but which are not themselves neoliberal. When we are forced to recode intellectual work, pedagogy, and other academic formulations in strictly neoliberal terms, the fact of their ongoing independent existence becomes more and more obscure even to their practitioners. This means that we cease to see our own separate practices as such. The general strike serves as an opportunity, not only to

[30] Other examples of archism include liberalism itself, fascism, monarchism, and a great many other political forms, all united by the fact that they are based on some form of representation (wherein the people are "represented" whether by the dictator or by parliament as a way to depoliticize themselves both politically and economically) as well as on some integral forms of hierarchy wherein some aspects of law and politics are held above other aspects. (including forms of racism, misogyny, class structure, "respect for the law," etc.

create brand new ways of being (and striking) together, but also to recuperate existing practices that have been swept along, coopted and hijacked by neoliberal forms of vision and organization.

The general strike exposes a number of unexpected vulnerabilities about the regime of neoliberalism (as it does for all ontological regimes). As already mentioned, it exposes the fact, in this case of administrators, as opposed to the strikers themselves, of not being able to *not* see through neoliberal eyes. This means the kinds of transformations the general strike creates in its own strikers will be entirely unexpected and invisible to them so they cannot prepare for or anticipate what is coming (that's exactly why Strong spoke of how the strike would lead to "no one knows where"). The administrators might, probably do, expect—and maybe even welcome—threats and violence against them (they know perfectly well how to deal with such things) but a total disengagement from practice is something else. The complete withdrawal of authorization can bring down this kind of regime in an instant (as we can see in cases of mass revolt more generally).

This leads to a second asymmetry and vulnerability on the part of administrators. They need the academic workers under their thumb to exist at all. To be administrators and to justify their ever increasing salaries, they have to administer *something* and *someone*. The reverse, however, is not true. There is no need for the massive, bloated, and parasitic structures that sit atop contemporary colleges and universities which take all the resources for itself and then insist on subjecting the rest of us to pointless and very costly innovations (often profiting the regents or others who control universities very much, including public ones), all of which lead to greater administrative power at the expense of everyone else. Accordingly, if and when the administration's bluff is called and the raison d'être supplied by neoliberalism is refused, there is no other form of justification they can bring for their continued domination of the university system.

A related third vulnerability comes from the fact neoliberalism—like every ontology—is premised on its own invisibility. To function best, it should be background, not visible as a functioning system at all (this is probably one of the reasons why no one ever says "I am a neoliberal.") The kinds of changes in thinking and awareness that come from engaging in a general strike exposes neoliberalism for what it is, not an ordered, coherent and highly rationalized plan for maximal human efficiency and organization but rather a form of imperialism, an aggression and an attack on collective and individual forms of expression and freedom including

academic forms. As such, what may seem seductive and alluring within its own logics becomes thoroughly unpalatable even unbearable when so exposed. In this way it is possible—not certain but possible—that a kind of virtuous circle of further exposure and resistance to neoliberalism might result from turning to the general strike. It would serve as a means (a pure means at that!) of making the university and the world around us other than what it otherwise seems doomed and fated to be. If you think academic freedom is no longer possible and you have nothing but a dreary eternity of neoliberal predation in store (and the examples of neoliberal practices from universities in the United Kingdom and Australia are **so much worse** than in the United States itself, offering us a very grim future indeed) isn't it worth thinking about a general strike as a way to change the terms of what is and isn't possible in the first place?

As a final thought, given at the time of this writing, the world is under siege by a pandemic which has had a catastrophic effect both in terms of human health and economic consequences, it might be thought this is no time to think about radical and revolutionary responses like a general strike. This is the time, many argue, for social solidarity and political unity. My response is this is precisely the time for radical thoughts and actions. The massive layoffs and seemingly inevitable deep recession (or depression) the COVID-19 pandemic has helped to unleash is an opportunity for neoliberalism to deepen its parasitic grip on academia like never before. The shift to mass online classes and the deepening of precarity that bad economic times brings with it is a pure gift to neoliberalism which is, as previously noted, always about power and control and never about economic efficiency. For all of this, the pandemic is also an opportunity like no other to radicalize academic workers insofar as the lines of control are clearer than they've ever been and our choice of a response also becomes quite clear: we can submit once and for all to the neoliberal fox who guards the henhouse or we can fight back, with the general strike being the most critical tool in our arsenal.

CHAPTER 11

Abolish the Lecturer: A Manifesto for Faculty Equity

Brad Erickson

How many and what percentage of college faculty are lecturers, workers denied the protections and compensations of tenure while marked with the stigma of an inferior labor tier? Is it over or less than a million? Is it 75% of all faculty or only 70%? How many lecturer faculty live below the poverty line or rely on public assistance? Is it getting better or getting worse? (Flaherty 2018; New Faculty Majority n.d.; House Committee on Education and the Work Force 2014). The quantification of inequality holds less interest for me than analysis of the processes that create the fissured workplace and strategies to dismantle it. The necrophilic reduction of human lives to economic and managerial calculation is a central feature of the neoliberal turn often used against us. But we are not data; we are human beings. It is the conditions and possibilities of human life that most concern me. At present, the two-tier labor system forms the dominant structure of constraint limiting the human possibilities of faculty in higher education.

B. Erickson (✉)
San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA, USA

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Many lecturer faculty have qualifications comparable to their tenure-line colleagues but lack access to comparable compensation, job security, opportunities for advancement, working conditions, support for scholarship, voice in governance, academic freedom, professional development, and recognition (Swidler 2017). While tenure-line faculty are imagined to have earned their status through *merit*—a key tenet of neoliberal inequality—there is no pretense that a meritorious lecturer who, for example, produces scholarship or teaching outcomes comparable to a tenure-line colleague, has a comparable path to first-tier rewards. Neoliberal ideology insists the market rewards merit but adjunctification exposes the market reducing highly trained educators and scholars to a vulnerable, disposable proletariat (Monbiot 2016).

Inequality in the US is driven in part by the shift to a contingent workforce denied fair pay and benefits through misclassification as contractors, such as FedEx and Uber drivers, or by being paid for piecework on demand like farmworkers used to be and lecturer faculty still are (Frederickson 2015). There has always been an alternative to this exploitative arrangement, namely, hiring enough tenure system faculty to cover vacancies due to sabbatical, family, or medical leave. But the arbitrary division of faculty into advantaged and disadvantaged tiers indulges the neoliberal fetish of flexibility at lecturer expense, and, as I will show, erodes academic freedom and reinforces raced and gendered inequality.

The excuse that the university cannot afford full tenure density is belied by the colossal US economy, heavy investments in campus facilities and technology, and the exponential growth of exorbitantly paid upper management on US campuses (California Faculty Association 2017b). Artificial claims of austerity have justified decades of cuts to public universities while shifting education costs to working families, falling hardest on Black, Indigenous and Latinx communities. The discourse of austerity masks a massive redistribution of wealth from the poor to the rich by cutting taxes for corporations and the wealthy while gutting the infrastructures of support that help poor and working people gain an economic toehold or merely survive (American Federation of Teachers 2012).

This regressive distribution of wealth is mirrored by public as well as private universities. Between 1993 and 2009, universities added ten times more administrator positions than faculty positions, meaning the precipitous upsurge of tuition and crippling student debt has done little to advance classroom education—the core purpose of the university—but

has rather boosted the salaries of a conquering horde of bureaucrats to the detriment of campus democracy (Frederickson 2015).

These neoliberal bureaucrats collect, digitize, and analyze increasing amounts of data about faculty and students with the ostensible aim of evaluating and improving educational outcomes, but their conclusions never stray far from a monetized focus on cost-cutting and risk management (cf. Munene 2018). Faculty are periodically admonished by these functionaries to decrease drop-out rates and increase the speed at which students grab their diplomas and make way for the next round of income generators, expanding their "student consumer base" (Winkler 2018, p. 119). Campus bureaucrats offer no suggestions, much less material resources to achieve these ends. The lived reality of students—many of whom work, support families, or struggle to overcome health, mental health, criminal justice system, or immigration problems—is not acknowledged as a factor in low and slow graduation rates. Faculty are left to accede to or resist the hint to simply hand out more passing grades, regardless of learning outcomes. For many students, from kindergarten to graduate school, the primary barriers to academic success lie outside the classroom (Erickson 2014; Jack 2019). The California State University system itself reported as many as 12% of its 460,000 students suffer "housing displacement," or homelessness, and as many as 24% are going hungry (California State University 2016). While CSU campuses offer ameliorative programs to these students such as food pantries and meal plans, root solutions such as free tuition or housing are never on the menu.

Quantitative studies tell half the story. In our classrooms we witness the gendered, racially disparate and dehumanizing impacts of artificial austerity, gentrification, over-policing, and immigration policy. Students are engaged and motivated one day, traumatized and beaten down the next, complacent or fiercely militant, and some simply disappear. Many students struggle against the odds. I've taught a class holding a student's sick baby while she called the doctor then arranged to get notes from a classmate. Other students tell me their stories of incarcerated, deported or murdered family members; of displacement to distant cities, living in cars or couch surfing; of domestic violence and sexual assault; of resorting to sex work; and of battles with PTSD, depression, and other disorders. These traumas impact learning and sometimes manifest as classroom disruptions most faculty are not equipped to defuse, much less diagnose. We are instructed to refer students to overloaded campus services and to

file reports: reports that feed management aims to limit legal exposure and transform students and faculty into data without our consent and beyond our control.

Despite the constant scrutiny of student lives and faculty efficiency, the bureaucrats themselves are never similarly assessed or held accountable, leaving reasonable people to wonder if the benefits they ostensibly provide merit their lavish share of resources. High executive pay is invariably defended as the way to secure the best people (Vedder 2016) or as "fair market value," the latter betraying the creep of corporate hegemony over public institutions to usher university presidents into the ranks of the 1% (Erwin and Wood 2014). But the best people would not preside over the neoliberal take-over of public education. The best people would not normalize the exploitation of lecturer faculty, staff, and students or treat growing inequality as inevitable. The best people would not ignore evidence that their policies exacerbate racial and gender inequality. The best people would be our champions, fighting to restore robust funding and its equitable distribution to provide dignified work and learning conditions for all members of the campus community.

Instead, the inferiority of lecturers is institutionalized through a range of economic, organizational, and discursive measures that marginalize us with respect to compensation, power, and dignity. Employment conditions exploit lecturers in several ways. The most flagrant is the two-tier pay gap. On my campus, lecturer faculty must teach five courses per semester to earn a full-time salary whereas tenure-line faculty normatively teach three courses to earn full-time pay. This disparity permits tenure-line faculty to dedicate 40% of their paid time to research, scholarly activity, creative work, professional development, and campus or community service (Academic Senate 2002). Denying lecturer faculty the same allowance alienates us from the campus community and the professional life we trained for. Lecturer faculty that contribute to scholarly and campus life beyond the classroom do so without compensation, thus subsidizing rewards that accrue to others. This structural arrangement serves to exclude lecturer faculty from decision-making bodies and undermine campus democracy. Tenure-line faculty complain of the burden of advising and committee work but few would exchange that work for the additional courses lecturer faculty teach. But this offers a point of solidarity. When we abolish the lecturer, all faculty will share non-teaching work, a voice in governance, and support for scholarly pursuits.

The fundamental inequality of the two-tier pay gap is exacerbated by the way faculty advance in pay grade. At my campus this is based on the number of years employed in one department. Tenure-line employment typically proceeds in a single department, whereas nationally, 89% of lecturer faculty teach at multiple institutions (Flaherty 2014). The fragmentary structure of part-time, contingent labor prevents lecturer faculty from advancing at the same rate as their first-tier colleagues, or from advancing at all. We must abolish the lecturer and count all past teaching to determine pay grades.

Across-the-board pay raises are ostensibly egalitarian but such raises increase inequality since those who benefit from the two-tier pay gap and continuous departmental employment already receive more pay. A fixed-percentage increase gives more to those who start with more and widens the gap between the two tiers. We must abolish the lecturer, demand an equity pay raise to lift those at the bottom, and demand that no elements of our contracts serve to increase the disparity between the two tiers.

Lecturer faculty inferiority is also marked by evaluation. Tenure-line faculty are assessed for the excellence of their scholarship, teaching, and service. In contrast, the scholarship and service of lecturers usually count for nothing in our employment, retention or advancement. Our performance is primarily evaluated in the most neoliberal way imaginable: an anonymous on-line survey. To put this in perspective, imagine the peer-review of research replaced by Yelp reviews.

Just as neoliberalism converts faculty from professionals to proletarians, it reduces learners to consumers. While students can provide valuable feedback, students should not become proxy supervisors, especially because meta-analysis of large sample studies demonstrates no significant correlation between student evaluations and student learning outcomes (Flaherty 2016a; Lawrence 2018). The continued use of student evaluations despite their fatal defects demonstrates managerial incompetence, malice, or both. As I will show, the imposition of student evaluations of teaching is structurally injurious to campus democracy, academic freedom, and racial and gender equity.

With respect to democracy, I suggest student evaluations of teaching serve no other function than to reduce student and faculty lives to quantifiable data as a form of top-down, neoliberal control that usurps the autonomy of faculty to develop our own processes to evaluate teaching effectiveness and establish meaningful processes with students to measure

their learning. Student evaluations of teaching represent an administrative power grab.

The two-tier system constitutes an attack on academic freedom precisely through the dependence on student evaluations in decisions to hire or retain contingent faculty. Economic precarity, employment insecurity, and weak institutional support provide strong disincentives for lecturer faculty to teach students to critique the default, largely unexamined ideologies of neoliberalism, patriarchy, white supremacy and neocolonialism, thereby training another generation to accept and perpetuate status quo violence and inequality. The students of a faculty member who avoids these topics will receive the message that it's okay to ignore them and never learn to have hard conversations or to experience the discomfort of challenged assumptions (Swidler 2017). The easiest way to get good student evaluations is to require little work, be entertaining, keep to safe topics, and give A's to every student with a pulse. Lecturer faculty that challenge students to critique their world or improve their skills, require college level performance or give failing grades to students that do not meet minimum standards place themselves at risk (Lawrence 2018). Official proclamations about academic freedom and institutional commitments to improved student learning outcomes are meaningless when contingent faculty are under pressure to get good teaching evaluations and to keep their heads down to avoid managerial notice.

The other way for lecturer faculty to improve their student evaluations is to be white and male. Studies of student evaluations demonstrate systemic preference for male over female instructors and white faculty over Faculty of Color (Mengel et al. 2017; Merrit 2008). Thus, reliance on student evaluations for hiring, retention or advancement violates the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, actively producing racial and gender inequality. On those counts alone student evaluations should play no part in any employee's evaluation. And the negative impacts of the inferior status of lecturer faculty is intersectionally multiplied because newly hired lecturer faculty are disproportionately People of Color and lecturer faculty have always been disproportionately female (American Federation of Teachers 2010; Flaherty 2016b; Frederickson 2015). The two-tier system has a discriminatory impact that reinforces white supremacy and patriarchy.

These facts about student evaluations of teaching suggest the following demands: the immediate end of student evaluations and the purging of

their data from personnel files; the establishment of a faculty-led body to develop a fair process of teaching evaluation; the formation of a body of students and faculty to create open channels for student feedback with no bearing on hiring, retention or advancement; the creation of a faculty-led body to develop student assessment tools that effectively measure learning outcomes; and finally, removing expenses associated with student evaluations from administrative budgets and rededicating those resources to reducing student tuition and increasing faculty pay.

No one should mistake the popular perception of the university as a bastion of left politics, lofty campus values crafted for public consumption, or the carefully curated imagery of campus diversity (Chang 2016) for substance. The glacial pace of racial parity among university faculty is such that a *Journal of Blacks in Higher education* report concluded: "it will take about a century and a half for the percentage of African-American faculty to reach parity with the percentage of Blacks in the nation's population" (*JBHE* in Strauss 2015). How the university maintains white supremacy beyond the exclusions of the two-tier system and what can be done about it is explored elsewhere in this volume (see Chapter 2). To the extent, like other organizations, universities produce racially disparate outcomes, these essays substantiate James Baldwin's assertion all US institutions are racist (1985).

The lens of gender reveals the entrenched values and practices of patriarchy as foundational to the two-tier system. While faculty at the full professor rank are overwhelmingly male at about 67%, and 59% of all tenure-line faculty are men, the majority of lecturer faculty are female, at 55%, and the percentage of all contingent instructors in higher education is estimated to be 61% female (Frederickson 2015; US Department of Education 2018). This gendered inequality is thought to originate from the time few universities allowed women to be full professors but often hired the wives of professors to teach as instructors for considerably less pay and little professional respect (Frederickson 2015). This history suggests that the two-tier system is inherently patriarchal and paternalistic. Just as the anti-Blackness of public policy on crime or public assistance spills over to harm poor white people (Taylor 2016), the patriarchy of the two-tier system produces harm for both male and female lecturer faculty.

While broadly evident in the two-tier structure, paternalism became specifically obvious on my campus through two policy decisions. The first reached my attention when I learned that, unlike any other class of faculty, as lecturer faculty, I was not automatically approved as a Principal

Investigator in any University-sponsored research (despite my experience supervising research teams) but would have to run a humiliating gauntlet of special approvals by half a dozen deans and deanlettes, all the way up to the Provost. The second was when I learned that lecturer faculty access to student records had been revoked in the interest of student privacy. While this implied that tenure-line faculty could be trusted to respect the confidentiality of students but lecturer faculty could not, it also placed lecturer faculty in a dependent relationship to tenure-line faculty. If I want to find out how my struggling student is doing in other classes, for example, or even if they have completed the prerequisites for a course they want to add, I must depend on the discretion of the department chair to determine whether I can be trusted with such information. But these two measures, however irksome, are minor symptoms of the systemic way second-tier status thwarts the professional activities of lecturer faculty.

When lecturer faculty do manage to continue research or creative work, we do so despite a withering lack of institutional support. Unlike our tenure-line colleagues, our unpaid scholarship and service typically play no part in our hiring, retention or advancement. But this is not the worst of it. Universities provide an array of grants, awards, paid leave, and other professional development support to faculty but the lion's share is reserved for tenure-line faculty. Lecturer faculty are ineligible for most research and service awards and are instead sidelined to a few teaching grants. But even here, many of us lack access. Of the few awards open to lecturer faculty at my campus, many are excluded through requirements for five or six years of employment at a minimum 40–60% time-base. In contrast, newly hired assistant professors enjoy instant eligibility for a range of research, service, and teaching awards. Already categorically inferior to our tenure-line colleagues and assumed to have little capacity for scholarly achievement, lecturer faculty compete to keep pace with both hands tied behind our backs.

While a few professionals with nonacademic careers (and incomes) enjoy teaching a class or two on the side, the majority of lecturer faculty want full-time, secure jobs, with living wages and the ability to continue the scholarly pursuits we trained for (Flaherty 2015). While California's promised increases to tenure density and conversions of lecturer to tenure-line jobs are yet to materialize at scale (California Faculty Association 2017a), systemic disadvantages force many lecturer faculty off the road that leads to professional advancement. As we work to abolish the two-tier system, we must demand a doubling of campus-based grants and

proportionate lecturer faculty access to the professional support tenure-line faculty take for granted, as well as the revocation of discriminatory, paternalistic exclusions.

I will pause here to clarify, while the complete abolition of the two-tier system must be the ultimate goal of any campaign for faculty equity, that goal will not be achieved overnight but will be advanced through specific, measurable demands. Whether addressed through contract negotiations, academic senates, grievance procedures, or lawsuits, faculty equity demands should include the following.

1. Increased tenure density.
2. Conversion of lecturer lines to tenure lines.
3. Course reductions for lecturer faculty in parity with tenure-line faculty.
4. Salary equity measures to decrease disparity and ensure no employment provisions increase disparity between tenure-line and lecturer faculty.
5. Step system parity to ensure all faculty share the same opportunities to increase their earnings over time.
6. Fair evaluation through the abolition of student evaluations and the development of alternatives under faculty control.
7. Lecturer power: proportionate lecturer faculty seats on all academic senate committees and other governing bodies.
8. Professional development parity such that lecturer faculty receive an equitable share of all forms of university support.

While these structural, institutional changes form the bedrock of our demands, there is an additional dimension of the two-tier system that must be addressed. If the two-tier pay gap, exclusion from decision-making, erasure of our scholarship and service, reduction of our professional calling to a customer service function, and marginal access to professional support are not enough to communicate that lecturers are nobodies, campus discourse, and representational practice supply additional reminders. We are often called *adjunct*, nonessential by definition, despite the fact that we teach the majority of courses.

A visual studies lens helps illuminate the marginalization of lecturers. Nicolas Mirzoeff appropriates Hannah Arendt's notion of the "space of appearance" to analyze anti-Blackness and the visual strategies of

the *BlackLivesMatter* movement. For Mirzoeff, the space of appearance concerns subjection or liberation through the circulation of images and the space where people can appear to each other to create a politics, for example to claim the right to exist and demand rights. In short, to appear is to matter (Mirzoeff, 2017). Universities circulate images and texts that evidence the value placed on different members of the campus community. Near the top of campus visual hierarchy, the achievements and milestones of tenure-line faculty are trumpeted from the halls and walls, in awards, communiqués, publications and at celebratory fêtes; perhaps deservedly, yet in ways that remind lecturer faculty that our accomplishments are nothing and that the only stone we may expect to mark our passage is that of a pauper's grave.

While the discursive, representational justifications for the disparities of the two-tier system are hurtful, I do not demand my department include a glossy headshot of me alongside those of my tenure-line colleagues on the bulletin board nor that my publications be lauded on the campus website nor any other representational move that would suggest a parity does not exist. What I want is equal pay, security, and support for doing the same work.

Our tenure-line colleagues are not the enemy. They did not create the system even if they are sheltered from its worst effects. They could do much to improve conditions for lecturer faculty but the ideology of meritocracy encourages the view that lecturer status indexes personal defect, such that we deserve our shabby quarters in the academic basement. The administrators defending their abuse of contingent faculty to give themselves raises find it convenient for tenure-line faculty and the public to accept this justification. It's part of the general public relations war against educators, rhetorics that attack school teachers and college faculty in both tiers: we're incompetent, we're greedy, we need corporate overseers.

Beyond the dubious lures of *schadenfreude*, self-congratulation or absolution, there are no incentives for tenure-line staff to drink the Kool-Aid of meritocracy—but there are risks. Academic freedom and work conditions for all faculty are threatened by the two-tier division that strips basic security from the majority of its numbers thereby weakening the political voice of faculty as a whole. All faculty need to work together, and as we build we must also find ways to join with staff and students and pursue public support for higher education as a political community. We must create our own space of appearance.

As we build campus democracy and transform our own work and learning conditions, we will gain broader political capacities to transform society in positive ways. For example, California and many other states require universities to purchase furniture and other supplies from prison industries, thus perpetuating the miseries of the prison-industrial complex (Davis 2003). Vigorously democratic universities could redefine their relationship to this egregious form of exploitation and ultimately contribute to decarceration. Additional opportunities for extramural advocacy are presented in this volume (see Camacho, Chapter 8 and Martel, Chapter 9 [2020]).

I urge my tenure-line colleagues to support lecturer faculty demands, not as paternalistic charity, but to advance the power of faculty as a whole. Tenure-line faculty can use their relative positions of security, visibility and prestige to speak out for equity for lecturer faculty while respecting lecturer faculty leadership to shape our demands as workers. Ultimately, we will need you, our tenure-line colleagues, to join us on the picket line because substantive change will never happen without struggle and sacrifice. Are you willing to go on strike with us? If the answer is *not yet*, what will get you there? As academics we're great at signing on to principled statements but equity for lecturer faculty will require not just saying the right thing but doing the right thing. So participate in our unions and organizing; bring your solidarity and skills. And while we might mentor you about labor strategy, you can mentor us in ways that help break down the two-tier division: invite us to partner with you on research, publications and grants; share power in shaping the curriculum and the budget; observe us in the classroom, offer constructive feedback and write letters for our files. Fight for more tenure-line positions, and when a tenure-line position opens up, insist current lecturers get first consideration. Think about how the people already teaching your students can be integrated as tenure-line faculty and design job descriptions around our expertise. Instead of looking outward for the next hotshot (who might misfire), think about how you can equitably incorporate faculty you already have.

Academic freedom can only flourish on a campus that defends the rights and humanity of all members of its community from faculty to staff to students and their families while reaching out to neighbors and allies. There are many steps along the way and we should celebrate small victories but we can never settle for slightly less exploitation. As it stands, lecturer faculty have no path to security, fair pay, or the life of scholarly

purpose enjoyed by tenure-line staff. In other words, lecturers have no future. There is one way to create this future: abolish the lecturer.

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CHAPTER 12

Racist Algebra of Abjection: A Template of Racial Violence

Reshmi Dutt-Ballerstadt

As I prepared a lecture to be delivered at Texas A&M called "The Body Remembers: The Cost of Institutional Racism," I was reminded of Sara Ahmed's warning: "*The creation of diversity as a political solution can participate in making those who speak about racism the cause of the problem.*"[1] I am taken back to a time when my entire being felt like it would shut down resulting from being made a problem. A problem and a shutdown caused by speaking up against institutional failures to protect the very bodies the institution had hired (and benefitted from) to be abused. To be made a problem, I realized, stemmed from what I want to call a "racist algebra of abjection"—targeting those whose views threaten the status quo of upholding white supremacist structures. And it all started in a small town in East Texas right after September 11, 2001, a month after the Twin Towers crumbled.

[1]Sara Ahmed (2012, p. 143).

R. Dutt-Ballerstadt (✉)
Linfield College, McMinnville, OR, USA
e-mail: rdutt-b@linfield.edu

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I was fired from my first tenure track job. That was February 2002. I had only been at this job for about 2 months and was hired as an Assistant Professor to teach Postcolonial Literatures, my area of expertise. I had received a hate letter in my university mailbox, written on a departmental letterhead, sealed in an envelope asking me *to leave*.

So I shared the letter with my department chair (who also was a Faculty of Color). Upon seeing my letter, she shared with me she had been receiving cut outs of job postings from *The Chronicle of Higher Education* in her mailbox ever since she had joined the department. "Women and minorities encouraged to apply" was often highlighted.

The next day, I took my hate letter and shared it with the Dean of Liberal Arts and requested an investigation be conducted. Given there were threats in the letter, I also requested the locks to my office be changed.

Needless to say, nothing happened. It was already December 2001.

So I asked the Dean if I should contact the FBI and have them investigate the matter. After all receiving hate mail on stamped departmental letterhead is a federal crime. Upon hearing this, within two weeks, the department put together an ad hoc committee and without any explanation, did not renew my contract for the following year. My department chair was not onboard and abstained from the vote. Later, the Dean removed my department chair from her position without any due process.

I left.
I came back to a safe space.
I survived.
I moved on.
I learned what happens when you complain.
I learned what happens when you are untenured and a woman of color.
I learned universities are not always obligated to follow "due process."
I learned they are powerful enough to avoid accountability.

But I just did not leave. I filed a grievance against the department. I learned a lot about my constitutional protections, EEOC procedures, AAUP guidelines, and "due process" as spelled out in faculty handbooks. In my grievance hearing a colleague testified who had left a couple years earlier. In his testimony, he identified colleagues within the department who could have written my *hate letter*. I learned this was the regular practice of *Old Guard faculty* to threaten new colleagues who *they* deemed

were progressive. I learned some of them were active supporters of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK).

And then this colleague said something quite remarkable to me:

> Being fired is probably the best thing that could have happened to you. You get to leave. Only the healthy ones get to leave this place. The rest stay and become a part of a diseased system.

Years later, I ran into another colleague, who also had left the institution. She told me as a result of my grievance the university investigated the department and named it as one of the most dysfunctional departments on campus, where discrimination was rampant. Within two years after I had left, six other junior faculty left. ALL were Faculty of Color. The department, however, was unaware it had any problems.

Five years passed. By then, I had landed another tenure track position at another institution. I was happy. My new colleagues were nothing like my old colleagues. They knew my past. They knew my story. They thought I was brave.

I received tenure in 2007. I was finally ready to throw away the entire file of my grievance materials. It was like an encyclopedia. I wanted to burn it. So, before I threw it away, I took one last look at my past, my scars, their audacity, their power, and their abuse. My eyes finally rested on a page containing a brief email from the Dean. In this email, he had written he did not find reasonable cause or threat to prompt an investigation about the hate letter I had received.

I wanted to know if the Dean was still the Dean. So I Googled him. What I found was an obituary. I learned the Dean and his wife were taking a vacation in the Bahamas and he had drowned. *He drowned*.

While this was not an ending I expected to find, after all of those years I was finally able to throw away my grievance file. *I was saved*.

"Predatory Inclusion"[2]

The above personal narrative is a narrative of "predatory inclusion." While the term predatory inclusion is used by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor to describe housing discrimination in the United States, especially undermining Blacks, I want to borrow this term to describe a kind of cover up

[2] A term coined by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor. In this model, bankers and real estate brokers worked together with the government to support housing policies that fortified racial inequalities and made billions of dollars for the private sector.

of discriminatory practices institutions undertake while outwardly touting their "diversity and inclusion" initiatives. It is "predatory" because on one hand institutions tout how their various diversity initiatives have attracted underrepresented students and faculty "to be included" and yet, these inclusions are cover-ups for various forms of exclusions that continue to arise within the various power structures of the institution. Implicit in maintaining these sites of institutional power are simultaneous methods of exclusions via organized methods to silence, discredit, and undermine marginal voices that advocate for systemic change, speak back, and speak against the status quo white supremacy within our institutions.

While the university brochure and web presence makes diversity visible, when "diversity workers" begin to probe the various forms of racism within the institutional setting, their voices are effectively silenced, undermined, and often retaliated against.

In this chapter, I intend to map these discourses that are less about the perpetuation of racism, but more about reclaiming a space to expose the normalization of everyday systemic racism that has become a routinized feature within US higher education. Further, attempts to challenge these supremacies are almost always immediately countered by calls of violations of civility codes, and attempts to regulate speech, thoughts, and ideas. Here, civility is weaponized to avoid charged or confrontational dialogues, or what Tobias Kelly and Sharika Thiranagama have argued in their paper, "Against Civility,"[3] is a kind of armor, "prohibiting us from confronting oppressions, injustices, subjugation, and disenfranchisements. They assert:

> Being civil when facing gross injustice appears simply hypocritical and inauthentic. Advocating civility can place etiquette and manners above equality and justice, and the call for us all to "get along" risks glossing over serious and important political divisions. In a world of civility, we must wear a mask, hiding our anger from view.

Civility often becomes an ideology, or what Michael McGee calls an "ideograph" where any attention drawn to "antagonism" as Dana Cloud argues in "Civility as a Threat to Academic Freedom"[4] "definitionally

[3] Tobias Kelly and Sharika Thiranagama (2017).

[4] Dana L. Cloud (2015).

violate the rules of civility and are subject to legitimized sanctions." Historian Joan W. Scott[5] has also posited "civility" becomes a synonym for "orthodoxy"; "incivility" designates "unorthodox ideas or behavior."

In my 2018 op-ed piece in *Inside Higher Ed*, "Are You Supporting White Supremacy?"[6] I had noted how the rules of civility are often compromised (bordering on differentiated standards) within our institutional structures from how awards are determined, to hires, promotion and tenure decisions made to protect white supremacy structures. Any protest in defense of critical diversity is met by a climate of hostility and charges of incivility. I also noted one of the features of a mundane and everyday practice of white supremacy within the academy is an (un)conscious instinct to nominate only those students and faculty for awards or leadership positions who are deemed as "stellar" (mostly men) and obviously "white." Given meritocracy and racial diversity have always shared a contested, and vexed, relationship, where issues of lack of access and privilege are often undermined or even ignored, I had also said (unapologetically) to those who blindly support meritocracy "it doesn't occur to [them] [they] are implicitly supporting a logic of meritocracy built on this racist assumption everyone has had the same access and opportunities" in their lives.

My above statement had received much backlash nationally from both self-identified white supremacists themselves and those within academia supporting the logic of meritocracy. The anger was less about the fact I had said meritocracy was a product of white supremacy, but more because I had called out such practices as "racist"—a terminology immediately marked as "uncivil" when such charges are identified by a Faculty of Color. Some of my own colleagues filed complaints against me for being hostile to them. One even called me a "nasty woman." Here there is a distinction to be made between a complainant and a complainer. The complainant in these contexts are often the diversity workers (those calling out the racist practices or the racists), while the complainers are often those whose status quo and sites of power and privilege are threatened by the diversity workers. I see those who complained against me as "complainers." Predominantly white institutions (PWIs) welcome their complainers and provide them with much more "due process" than their

[5] Joan W. Scott (2015).

[6] Dutt-Ballerstadt (2018).

complainants—especially if these complainants are marginalized subjects, women and/or racialized.

Institutionalized reluctance to take complaints made by marginalized subjects seriously often manifests into "due process failures," as a result of what I call a "Racist Algebra of Abjection." Furthermore, when the racialized or those who have reasons to believe they have been harassed by their institutions file complaints, they not only threaten the various machineries of damage control, but they also threaten the host–guest relationship (host being the institution and the guests within, i.e., minoritized/marginalized subject's being the guests). Suddenly these marginalized bodies become unwelcomed guests.

Being all too familiar with the archeology of complaints, or what Sara Ahmed reminds us, "trying to address an institutional problem often means inhabiting the institution *all the more*"[7] *I began to discover paths with which and up until that point I was unfamiliar. Ahmed describes these paths as*: "You learn about processes, procedures, policies, you learn to point out what they fail to do, pointing to, pointing out; you fill in more and more forms; forms become norms; files become futures; filing cabinets, graves."

While one is forced to take this path they also soon understand what comes with standing up against institutional structures guarding the status quo. Various road blocks, exclusionary practices, and the rampant nature of racism in academia in terms of who is appointed to be the gatekeepers guarding the sites of power, knowledge, and privilege become all too evident. These gatekeepers reproduce cultures of silence/ing, tone policing, and orthodoxy, while upholding institutional cultures of promoting "open dialogues" as long as they are "mutually respectful" and "civil." Here the intellectual diversity worker advocating for equity and social/racial justice is seen as an agitator attempting to remove the roadblocks and refusing to comply with institutional goals of diversity.

The institutional goals of diversity were never meant to challenge structural inequities or the maintenance of white supremacies, but only to make space for those on the margins to now be "included" but still kept at the margins. Here the function of diversity is what Ahmed describes "as a form of public relation[s]" campaign (as seen on glossy university brochures where diversity is made visible) yet the real work of diversity or

[7] https://feministkilljoys.com/2019/07/22/why-complain/.

the diversity worked remains invisible. Strategically speaking, the rhetoric of "*diversity [becomes] a method of protecting Whiteness.*"[8] Such methods of protecting whiteness, I want to assert, are precisely forms of epistemic violence that comes at the cost of alienating scholars of color from the academy and from the very products of their own intellectual labor, from their lived experience, and from the material conditions within which they generate new intellectual endeavors.

Is This Fiction?

In *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*, bell hooks asserts:

> When liberal whites fail to understand how they can and /or do embody white-supremacist values and beliefs even though they may not embrace racism as prejudice or domination (especially domination that involves coercive control), they cannot recognize the ways their actions support and affirm the very structure of racist domination and oppression that they profess to wish to see eradicated. (p. 113)[9]

George Yancy identifies the above as the "conception of the embedded white racist" (Yancy, p. 76)[10] where one "must critically rethink the ways in which [they] are not a site of complete self-possession … but rather a site of dispossession (that is, that [one is] constituted through others, institutional and discursive forces)." What are some of these embodiments of "white supremacist values and beliefs" leading to "coercive control" mechanisms? How do these values manifest themselves within the material space of where racialized faculty labor and work? What are the various ways in which those who knowingly or unknowingly displace whiteness are marginalized and even excluded from various dialogues and conversations, even though they are made to believe they are stakeholders? The next three fictionalized accounts demonstrate and mimic the forms of epistemic harm produced and reproduced within the academy. Also, there are many marginalized bodies who are ideologically white, or what Franz Fanon once called "Black Skin, White Masks" who continues to inhabit

[8] Sara Ahmed (2012, p. 143).

[9] bell hooks (1988).

[10] George Yancy (2018).

in white normative spaces and frameworks of institutionalized power and privilege.

Portrait #1: "*Go Back to Your Country!*"

Right after the election of Trump Sheila came back to work and found this large note on her door. It was written with red ink. Sheila is born here. Her parents are from Kenya. She immediately brings this to the attention of her department chair. She never hears back.

"*You are still here*?" Sheila receives another note a week later. This time she is afraid for her safety. She complains to the Dean. The Dean asks her to inform the chair. She again tells the chair and a few of her colleagues. One of her colleagues says, "that's not nice. I am very concerned" Another one asks, "Do you know who it could be?" Sheila wonders why are her colleagues not angry.

She finally tells this to a few of her trusted students. The students rally for her.

Sheila is called in by the Dean and is told she is being coercive, disruptive, and unprofessional. She must apologize to her chair. Her department chair stops talking to her. Her chair is a Black woman.

#ThereAreNoAllies#

#RacialIntimacyIsAMyth#

Portrait #2

Fatema is one of the three Faculty of Color on her campus. Fatema's area of scholarly expertise is in International Relations with a particular focus on banking and investments in the Middle East. She is not an angry woman of color. There are a few other underrepresented faculty on her campus too. In total there are seven, or maybe eight (if you count the faculty who claims she is really "kinda brown.")

Fatema is also tenured. She cannot say "no" to many of the service requests. Recently, her college has made a "serious" commitment to equity. Faculty voted to have diversity represented on every committee. She has served on the diversity committee, curriculum committee, several ad hoc committees (including one for parking) and was the only faculty of color on the college's strategic planning committee. It was **her idea** the college does do a climate study of underrepresented faculty and students. Her idea did not make it into the strategic plan. Later a white male

colleague suggestsed the same. **He** was asked to chair the committee for the climate study.

Fatema is planning to advance to full professor. There are only four other women on her campus that have been promoted to full professor in the last 20 years. She is not worried about her publications. She has a national and international reputation, but she is required to chair a major committee or a department. This year there is an opportunity for her to chair her department (and she feels quite ready for the undertaking). Yet, very recently she has been politely told by her Dean that "Jerry," her male colleague is better suited for this position given he will need to work with admissions to recruit students. *Enrollments are an issue.* And of course only Jerry has some special magic or formula that Fatema apparently does not to increase enrollments. She does not even have an accent.

She recently found out (through another colleague who was consulted) that there was a new interdisciplinary major being proposed in Middle Eastern Studies. Most of the faculty proposing this major are white and there is one East Asian faculty (who does not work on anything to do with the Middle East). She is baffled she was never consulted. Seriously baffled.

#NormalizationOfBeingUndermined#

#TokenDiversity#

Portrait #3

Ibrahim is a philosopher in a small liberal arts college in the Midwest where he teaches and he is the only Black professor. In total there are only four Faculty of Color. Given the rapid change in the college's student demographics where they now have 38% underrepresented students who identify as racial minorities, there is a push to hire more racially diverse faculty. So Ibrahim is asked to chair a search committee for his department.

At the first search committee meeting while identifying areas of interest to craft the job posting Ibrahim mentioned the job description should include non-Eurocentric focus on philosophy like Native American philosophy, environmental philosophy, cosmopolitanism, and the philosophies of reparations. His colleague asked, "do you think if we have as our final pool candidates predominantly representing racial diversity, is that legal in terms of representations?"

This question hung at the back of Ibrahim's mind as a permanent comma, a pause he struggled to overcome. The next day he gained enough strength and asked the committee this: "In our searches we have always had 100% white candidates before. Was this legal question of representation ever considered?"

#BiasIsQuiteConscious#

John Henryism: The Psychological Costs Are High

In *Citizen: The American Lyric*, Claudia Rankine narrates:

> You are in the dark, in the car, watching the Black-tarred street being swallowed by speed; he tells you his dean is making him hire a person of color when there are so many great writers out there.
>
> You think maybe this is an experiment and you are being tested or retroactively insulted or you have done something that communicates this is an okay conversation to be having. (p. 11)[11]

At the end of Rankine's prose-poem Rankine introduces a new medical term: *John Henryism*. It is used for people who are "exposed to stresses stemming from racism." Rankine tells us this term was coined by Sherman James and James said the "psychological costs were high."

I keep asking, what are these psychological costs of institutional racism and racist abjections many faculty of color and marginalized faculty experience within their institutions? Do they have any adequate responses to the kinds of negations and erasures they witness? Or like Rankine, do they confront the perpetrators of such violence directly? Or do they keep saying in their heads loudly, "Why do you feel comfortable saying this to me?" as Rankine did, deep within herself.

Instead, racialized and marginalized faculty inhabit this "being outraged" space where sometimes their trauma metabolizes as they witness the audacity of their white colleagues to assume *a colleague to be* is somewhat lesser than the one they have already chosen. And this is where the psychological costs begin to pile up. Most marginalized faculty realizes one day they too were on the other end of hiring, as a candidate. They wonder what these same colleagues thought of them, or still may think of them. While they have never thought of themselves as being

[11] Claudia Rankine (2014).

inferior (as an intellectual, as a writer, as a thinker, as a teacher)—they suddenly wonder, *if they really are!*

Epistemic harm comes in stages. Epistemic harm is constant. Epistemic harm is witnessed in the flesh.

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